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THE WAR AND THE SOUL

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BY

REV. R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A.

OF ST. PHILIP'S CATHEDRAL CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM

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INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of last year the writer of the accompanying little dissertations on great themes was approached by the management of the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* with the request that he should contribute a weekly article to the columns of that well-known periodical. He hesitated for some time before accepting the proposal, as he thought it hardly likely that the words of a preacher would have much value for such a constituency, and frankly said so. In reply the proprietors of the *Herald* courteously assured him that he need have no misgivings about the matter, that they were quite well aware of the fact that the subjects in which he was most at home were not those usually discussed in popular journals, but that they believed there was a public which wanted them, and that to this end they were prepared to offer him what was practically a pulpit.

The connection thus begun has continued harmoniously up to the present, and is likely to do so for some time longer. Week by week these articles have appeared, are still appearing regularly, and are read by the vast circle to which this Sunday newspaper goes. Those already published have now been gathered up in book form at the suggestion of Mr. Hulton of the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, and are being issued to the public by Messrs. Chapman and Hall. One or two have been added which did not appear in the *Herald*. Mr. Hulton held, rightly or wrongly, that many persons who

had read the articles in his paper would be glad to possess them in a single volume of more permanent character. A number of readers have made the same suggestion. One can but thank the management and editorial staff of the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* for the kind and generous interest they have shown from the first in these *obiter dicta* of one hitherto wholly outside their profession and accustomed to look at life from a different standpoint.

The author's thanks are also due to Messrs. Pearson, Limited, for permission to include two articles which have appeared under their auspices.

For the benefit of reviewers it should be stated that these chapters are not in any sense a unity. They are printed almost exactly as they originally appeared, and therefore necessarily retain the fragmentary and topical character of the weekly article. Nor are they addressed to the intelligentsia, as Mr. Shaw would say. They are written in simple fashion for simple people, which most of us are after all. That they deal with some of the great problems of life and death, of sorrow, and strain, and misery, especially in view of the war and all it means to our country and the world, is only to be expected. The writer undertook the work originally with this purpose in view. They represent a serious attempt to give help and encouragement, and a certain measure of enlightenment, to persons who at present feel their need of these owing to the abnormal conditions which prevail. They are therefore sent out on their further mission in the hope that an honest intent may secure for them a measure of welcome and goodwill, and that critics will be merciful to their many faults.

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THE WAR AND THE SOUL

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND THE WAR

A QUESTION which is agitating many minds at the present time is that of the possibility of any longer holding to belief in divine direction of human affairs in face of the appalling havoc wrought by the war. This is not what is ordinarily termed a religious question; it is being asked by thousands who are neither religious nor irreligious in the conventional sense. The majority of one's fellow-countrymen, if one understands them rightly, consists of persons who have a sort of respect for religion without troubling much about it; it is not until some special crisis occurs, some drastic interference with their ordinary modes of living, that they begin to inquire into the nature of their spiritual resources and what they are supposed to believe concerning them.

And this inquiry is going on now very seriously; or, rather, there is a widespread feeling of the utter insufficiency of religion, as commonly understood, to interpret for us the terrible situation in which we find ourselves. People are said to have lost faith, if they ever had it; Christianity is declared to

have collapsed; and we are told that the worst of all ironies just now is to try to impress the multitude of bereaved with any confidence in benevolent superhuman agency.

One is constantly meeting with intelligent, cultivated people who take this attitude, not to speak of the unthinking many who do the same. "Where was God when my only boy was bayoneted in the face and left to bleed to death in agony?" cries one broken-hearted mother. "If prayer were any use, would the child I bore with so much anguish, and for whom I have never ceased to besiege heaven day or night, be torn to pieces by German shells, and shriek for death to end his torments?" wails another.

And if it were men only, and death only! But women, little children, the frailest, most sensitive, most refined have had to endure every extremity of horror and abasement, and are doing so still.

When I was last in France some of our soldiers informed me of finding in certain bloody, filthy Prussian trenches they had taken no less than nineteen French and Belgian women and girls, stark naked, tied to posts, for their swinish captors to abuse as they pleased. Most of them were in a dying condition, some had lost their reason. Picture that, Englishmen, and ask what we should be feeling in this country should our wives and daughters ever be subjected to such an infamy, as they unquestionably would if the Huns succeeded in effecting a landing on our shores. Nearly a million helpless Armenians butchered amid every circumstance of

torture, rape, and pillage! And then to talk of God and Heaven! Are we fools?

Wait a moment. I am not over-anxious to defend religion as such; let religion go, if go it must—though I know it never can go while man exists. What I want is to find out what we poor creatures have to rely on in the struggle of life if the fundamental postulate of religion is a mistake and there is no higher consciousness than our own to know or care what becomes of us.

I am assuming nothing; I am only asking. Can we dispense with a spiritual sanction for human activities? Is it even conceivable that we could? By no means; and, what is more, I hold, and would be prepared to prove, that there never has been an hour in the world's history when the spiritual sanctions of human life were more apparent than now, all its horrors notwithstanding—nay, even because of them. We are getting down to realities if we ever did, delusions and deceits are being shorn away, and we are finding ourselves in losing all else. Let us try to see the problem in its true proportions, and I think we shall succeed.

Take the following propositions seriatim.

In the first place, the scale of the problem is not quite what it seems. We are apt to take for granted that if a million people suffer where only one suffered before the pain to be individually borne must be all the greater. But it is not. No person suffers a million times as much because a million others are suffering at the same time; we suffer one at once, and each bears his own share. No human conscious-

ness can bear more than a certain amount of suffering, bodily or mental, and my point is that the problem of human anguish is not one whit greater because a million or a hundred million lives are affected than because one is. All the woe of all the battlefields in Europe to-day might be concentrated in time of peace into the bosom of one old woman dying of cancer in hospital. All the grief of all the homes bereaved could be summed up in the tears shed by any open grave where faithful love mourns the loss of its dearest and best; the sorrow is not one bit bigger in the one case than in the other.

Let me insist upon the point, for it is worth noting. I say that the problem of what is wrong with the world is not greater by one iota because of the war than it was before the war began; our imagination is more deeply stirred, and that is all. The question is not why things should be wrong on such a grand scale, but why they should ever be wrong at all, why any single pang should ever have to be endured by a human heart, why loss and terror, and the destruction of things dear and beautiful should ever have to enter into our experience.

And I think we can see behind appearances here. Why should we assume that it is God's business, so to speak, to see that we are made happy in this world? That is the crux of the whole matter. Without pausing to think it out, most people take the ground that the goodness of God ought to imply the felicity of His creation here and now; their great puzzle is to account for a divine benevolence which acts otherwise. But, I repeat, we have no

warrant for this; it does not in the least follow that because God is good—granting for the moment that goodness, as we understand it, is an attribute of the divine nature—therefore there must be no pain or imperfection anywhere in the universe; in fact, there are not a few indications which point quite another way.

The object of life on this planet, so far as human beings are concerned, and perhaps all other creatures, too, is not happiness, but the development of latent faculty, the bringing out of the potentialities of existence as a whole. I grant that this is a prodigious assertion and one open to challenge, but I contend that no reasonable being can well doubt it if he have regard to history and experience. It is almost a truism to say that the highest kind of life, if we could realise it, must include all that we mean by happiness, but then we have not yet achieved the highest kind of life, or anything like it, and the very conditions of our earthly lot forbid that we should.

Let us get this one thing well into our minds, and it will clear the ground for a good deal else. I say that we are not put here primarily to be happy; there is a great deal of happiness in the world, but happiness at this stage of our evolution is not, and should not be, the first aim either of God or man in relation to humanity in the mass or the individual in particular. Perfect happiness, fulness of joy, will come later when we have got up to it, as it were, when we have reached the ultimate goal of all our strivings and attained to complete

realisation of what we essentially are and what life itself intrinsically is.

There are some things impossible even to omnipotence. "Father, can God do everything?" asked a small boy. "Yes," was the reply. "Well, then, can He make a stone bigger than He can lift?" was the next question put by the youngster. Here was a poser. Obviously omnipotence was not equal to such a task, for success in either direction would mean its own limitation in the other. And the same is true of higher issues. Not even omnipotence could declare the highest reach of nobleness without pain. The worthiest things, the sweetest and sublimest, in human character and achievement, require pain for their manifestation, and without pain could not be revealed at all. The things we most reverence in one another or in the mighty dead are things that have been born of sacrifice and struggle. Where were courage without danger, tenderness without hardship couching at the door, sympathy without suffering, glory and honour without peril and strife? Look deep enough, and you will see that there is not a single quality in the whole range of human excellence that is not somewhere, somehow, associated with the cross. I would rather see England great than England safe; I would rather our hearts' best beloved died to a man on the battlefields of Europe than live ignoble in the soul-destroying delights of sense indulgence; I would rather be the sorrowing mother of brave Nurse Edith Cavell, whom the Germans have murdered, than know my child a mere toy, a butterfly intent only on sipping the

sweets of life, and with neither eye nor ear for its more austere ideals and demands.

Moreover, I do not for one moment believe that the world is less Christian than it was before the war, or less intent on spiritual things. The exact contrary is the case as far as my experience goes. I have more than once stated that if any man wants to be cured of religious pessimism, or any other kind of pessimism, he had better go to the front. If I had been an unbeliever before I went there I should speedily have been cured. There one sees things every day, almost every hour, to make one marvel at the greatness of the human soul. You will see hell wide open, it is true, but you will see heaven likewise. Such heroism, patience, self-devotion, cheerfulness under affliction, readiness to fling life away to save a comrade or a position—surely these mean more, and are worth more, than the immediate object of their exercise.

Was the commercialised Europe of a year and a half ago really a better Europe than the Europe of slaughter and misery in which we are living to-day? That it certainly was not. Sordid, covetous, materialistic it had become; now all its outward good is going up in smoke and flame, and we are thrown back, whether we will or no, on the vast eternities. Either life has nothing in it or it must be lived to higher ends than can ever be fully satisfied in this world. If we are wise we shall not hesitate in our choice of alternatives. This is no time for self-pity or for abstract discussions of the ways of God. The clarion call to high action has gone forth,

and woe to the soul that disregards it; our punishment will be simply to drop out of the ranks of the advancing host of those who go to meet the splendours of God upon the cliff-tops of the morning.

It is trivial to ask whether heaven could or could not have prevented this war, just as it is beside the mark to question whether this or that human being was to blame for it. Here it is, and we have got to do the best we can in the new moral situation it creates. God is not responsible for any man's wickedness; and wickedness is wickedness, whatever comes of it. But when wickedness produces disaster on a grand scale or a small one we are entitled to say that that disaster could not have come about unless divine wisdom chose to make use of it for other and larger ends than any petty human will can either thwart or compass.

Christianity has not failed, whatever we may say of Christians. The Christian imperative is still here in all its pristine force; it is we who are found wanting. If the Church of Christ is not rising to the full measure of her opportunities that is our own fault, not the fault of her divine Founder. The Pope has lost the greatest chance that any occupant of the Vatican has had since the Reformation; his silence so far in presence of such a flagrant moral wrong as the violation of Belgium, and now the wholesale destruction of the Armenian people by Germany's dastardly ally, is one of the most regrettable facts in all this period of upheaval and misery. But Roman priests on the battlefield have more than made up for the silence of their official head, and no other Church

has been a whit behind them. When the Chief Rabbi of Lyons died holding the crucifix before the glazing eyes of a Belgian Catholic who took him for a priest, he exhibited more of the spirit of Christ, the spirit that will yet lift mankind out of this pit of horror into the light of eternal love, than any amount of ecclesiastical protestations would or could. The Church is not paralysed by the war, nor is her faith shaken. She needs a more vigorous lead, that is all.

There is only one point more that ought to be mentioned. Protestantism in general has had little comfort to give to mourners, for it has been so sadly silent regarding the fate of our dead. Once the grave has closed over their dust we have been supposed to be able to do no more for them and to be ruthlessly cut off from all connection with them, direct or indirect. May it not be that this war will bring us back in a more definite and helpful fashion to the doctrine of the Communion of Saints? Our dead are not only not dead, but more alive than we. To some extent they must need us still; the shock of passing out of the physical body cannot have changed them very much; they want us, think of us, long to know that they are followed by our loving thoughts and prayers. If they were helped in this way while in the body they can be helped even more when out of it. Perhaps they need such help all the more because of the momentous transition to a new sphere and new adjustments. Thought travels swiftly, and helps or hinders according to the intensity we put

into it even in the flesh; how much more potent must it be when the flesh has been discarded! Hopeless grief on our part can only distress and hamper those who have gone, and they probably know of it quite well; but earnest, faithful, persevering, loving prayer can reach to comfort them and cheer them on in their new venture of soul.

Let all who have loved and lost think of this and set to work to bridge the gulf of death accordingly, and it will bring healing to their own wounded hearts. Nay, more, I think they will find that ere long some sure conviction will come to them from the mysterious beyond that what they are doing is known and responded to by those on whose behalf it is done, and that they in their turn are sending back waves of heaven's tender grace and power to bless and strengthen their bereaved on earth.

CHAPTER II

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

A LETTER just received refers to the statement with which the previous chapter concluded, about prayers for the dead. The writer wishes I would say more about this. He says that in his heart he has really believed in it all his life, but has always been taught that it was both useless and wrong. Once a person is dead, it is said, his fate is fixed and you can no more alter it by praying than you can alter the seasons or the tides. Even to wish to do so is impious and a questioning of the decrees of God. All the same, this writer adds, he has always longed to do it and never more so than to-day, when the world-war is making such havoc among human relationships. Will I give him some justification, some real authority, for believing in the efficacy of prayer for the departed? he requests.

I wish the writer of this letter could have seen what I saw yesterday. It will be long past the date before these words are printed, but yesterday was what the French call "The Day of the Dead." Near where I am staying is a fairly large church, and in and out of this, all day long, the stream of worshippers has been pouring without intermission. They are still doing it to-day, though in a somewhat less degree, and they

will keep on doing it while the war lasts. Yesterday was All Souls' Day, to give it its ecclesiastical designation in England, as elsewhere throughout Christendom. Here, especially in view of the war, it seems to mean something very much more real and comforting than it does to most of us at home.

What a yawning gulf ordinary Protestantism makes between the living and the dead, to be sure!—or, rather, between those still in the flesh and those who have done with it. Not so the devout Catholic, simple-minded, earnest and sincere. To him, to her, the soul who has passed through the portals of death has not passed beyond the reach of loving care and tender sympathy. The loved one is not less, but more responsive to the loyal, helpful solicitude of those left behind, and perhaps, for a time, may need it more.

I sat in the church for a good while and watched those people come and go. It was an experience never to be forgotten. All were in mourning; all had lost some one near and dear either on the battlefield or in the ordinary course of nature. I judged, and I think I was not mistaken, that the war was uppermost in their minds, that the grim reaper had gained most of his harvest of late from the battlefield so far as this company was concerned.

There were no young men present; they were all at the front. There were plenty of old men, old soldiers many of them looked, stumping bravely along with military stride and bearing; old women leaning on sticks; grey-haired matrons with weeping eyes; young widows carrying their babies or leading their little children by the hand; boys in their teens, some

of them already in soldier's garb or what approximated thereto; girls, troops of them, with subdued and reverent mien.

Most were kneeling before the dimly lighted altar. Some of them, the veterans especially, stood erect, their lips moving in devoted entreaty to the holy Presence they believed to be there before their eyes. For it should not be forgotten that to these people, in the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, is vouchsafed a visual revelation of the actual presence of the Lord Christ Himself. Who shall say they are wrong? Since the war began, I have realised in French churches as I never did before, the devotional value, the practical helpfulness, of the reservation of the sacrament of the altar. It makes all the difference between a dead building and a place that is a sanctuary indeed, wherein worshippers feel that they are in immediate contact with the supernatural and divine.

What a picture it was! One wished an artist could have been present to seize and perpetuate it. It grew dark; there was a storm raging outside and had been all day, but it seemed to have made no difference to the numbers present. There was one candle, and one candle only, to light the gloom, and that was placed on the floor at the foot of the altar steps. The lamps glimmering in the chancel above it supplied the only additional illumination there was. Here and there one caught a quick breath, a murmur, a sob, a sigh as the feelings of the bereaved became wrought to a pitch of intensity. There was no other sound but that of feet passing softly to and fro as individuals entered or left the church. Now and then a faint gleam would

fall upon a rapt, upturned face—for the worshippers were kneeling anywhere, not in serried ranks, but in the aisles, near the doors, on the ground close up to the altar itself—anywhere—all in black, all silent, all praying with one set purpose, one intention of love and faith. It was impossible to be there without being moved by it. There was a strange, unearthly power in the very atmosphere.

Would any one tell me that the exercise upon which these people were engaged was all in vain, that heaven neither desired nor heeded it, and that the trust and affection that prompted it were utterly deluded as to the object they sought to achieve? Be it remembered, this, after all, is the faith of the majority of Christendom, the faith that the communion of saints still continues after the shock of death. It has antiquity on its side, and, though greatly abused in pre-Reformation days, satisfies such a natural instinct, and is such a solace to the bereaved, that it is a pity Protestants everywhere should not be encouraged to return to it forthwith.

If, as seems likely enough, the disembodied soul feels somewhat bewildered at first in its new environment, as we are told many do; if it has entered that new sphere through the din and excitement of battle or fresh from the pain and weakness and delirium of days and weeks in hospital; if it longs for the old faces and the old fellowships of the earthly home, and feels, as we may be sure it cannot but feel, the impact of the grief and sorrow of those who mourn its loss—surely the best thing one could do on this side, both for that soul and for ourselves, would be to send through

nothing but earnest prayers that it may rest in peace. I say " it," but I ought to say " he " or " she," as the case may be. Our dead are not gone far; they have only begun on the other side where they left off here. If they needed us before they need us now, and we need them. The body as the medium of communication is struck away, but that is all. Thought, feeling, memory, goodwill are all what they were before—perhaps even stronger, for the hindrance of the corruptible flesh is gone and the spiritual can go straighter to its mark. If we can help one another by prayer while we are still on the physical plane, there is no reason, either in logic or the nature of things, why we should not continue to do so even more effectually when some of us have done with the body of our humiliation and passed out of sight.

Death is only a bend in the road of life.

CHAPTER III

WAR SUFFERING. WHY DID GOD REFRAIN FROM STOPPING IT?

ANOTHER correspondent takes exception to a statement in the opening chapter: "When wickedness produces disaster . . . that disaster could not have come about unless divine wisdom chose to make use of it for other ends," etc.

He says he can understand the death of a heroine like Miss Cavell, or one of our brave soldiers, having lessons to teach to those around them and to us at home; but if they had to go through the infamous torture and degradation to which French and Belgian women were subjected, as stated above, it would revolt us to have to believe that God permitted it for some purpose of His own.

The statement, to which this gentleman says he cannot subscribe, ought not to be considered apart from its context. I am writing far away from my home and my library, and cannot quite recall the precise words used in the paragraph to which reference is made, but I know what I think about the matter and will try to say it.

We are not entitled to draw a line in this way between one kind of suffering and another, and affirm that one

is divinely permitted for a good reason and the other not. Deity cannot be responsible in the former case and helpless in the latter. Relatively speaking, all suffering, bodily or mental, is evil—that is, it would have no place in a perfect existence. It may have a purpose to serve—indeed, we may be sure it has—in the making of that perfect existence, but no one could say existence is perfect while suffering remains. But there is no escape from the proposition that what God permits He causes. He is an efficient cause, as the logicians say, of any event or series of events if He does no more than let them take place even if other wills set them going.

The Kaiser is an efficient cause of the present war, allowing for the moment that he did not actually start it. I am afraid he did. I am afraid he meant to do it; but even if he did not, even if other people planned it more directly and remorselessly, he is responsible for it if only from the fact that one word from him could have prevented it and that word was not spoken.

We might say the whole conflagration was immediately caused by a mad-headed student firing a shot at the Austrian heir-apparent. That shot was like a spark to gunpowder and set the world in a blaze. But does this exonerate the Kaiser? By no means. He is infinitely more responsible for the oceans of blood that have since been spilled than was the half-crazy boy who fired that shot.

Moreover, so far as the British empire's part in it is concerned, Sir Edward Grey is more responsible than the Serbian fanatic whose deed set the whole train of disasters in motion; and every one of us would say as

much. Sir Edward Grey could have kept us out of it, but he chose not to do so, and the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen think he chose rightly. Sir Edward Grey was an efficient cause of the terrible fact that we are at war to-day, that tens of thousands of our sons and brothers have been slain and hundreds of thousands maimed for life, that multitudes of homes have been plunged in mourning, that Edith Cavell was foully murdered, and I know not what else. But does this mean that our Foreign Minister deliberately chose that these evils should come about? Not at all; no one would say so. He only accepted these consequences rather than submit us to other and worse consequences such as national dishonour.

Now is not the point clear? Heaven could prevent anything it chose to prevent taking place on earth. If it does not do so it is because it does not wish to do so, because the alternative would bring greater evil in its train.

John Henry Newman says, in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, that it is preferable for a soul to undergo any torment rather than commit so much as one venial sin. One shrinks from endorsing this utterance to the full, but perhaps it is the truth. All the evil passion that is working such misery in the world to-day was in the world before; now it has broken loose and is showing its true character, destroying itself by glutting itself as evil always does. God could have stopped any suffering resulting from this cause. But He refrained from so doing, and I think we can see why. Innocent or guilty, we suffer together, and humanity is purged in the fires of affliction. The world would be in a worse

state if evildoing were not followed by pain than it is even at the present dark hour; and the innocent victims of brutality and wrong help to demonstrate that more than those justly punished, if ever any are justly punished. The sinless Christ upon His Cross has done more to convict the world of sin than all the criminals that were ever executed since human society began.

A few weeks ago a lady of strongly pacifist opinions was arguing with me against our participation in the war, and I almost lost patience with her—to speak quite truthfully, I did lose it. At length I told her of some of the horrible things our soldiers had related to me as having seen done to women in Belgium. "If those hounds of hell ever come here," I added, "they will do the same things to you and yours. How will your pacifist sentiments stand that? And, make no mistake about it, what stands between you and that outrage now is our Army and our Fleet. Let these give way before the foe, and you may expect the very uttermost in bodily ill-treatment, degradation, and bloody massacre." She turned pale for a moment and looked greatly distressed. The vision appalled her. But she is a good woman and absolutely sincere. Recovering herself, she answered with quiet dignity: "Well, if the worst came to the worst, I think I should not lose my trust in God. The shame would not be mine; the shame would be theirs who subjected me to such a fate; and they could only maltreat my body, after all; no stain would rest upon my soul."

In those few brave and honest words I think is summed up the best answer that could be given to the question raised above.

While I am writing I should like to mention something that bereaved families at home may be glad to know. On All Souls' Day, in the military district in France where I am at present working, the hospital staffs and the officers clubbed together to purchase flowers and decorated therewith the grave of every British soldier. *Requiescant in pace.*

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?

A FRIEND, looking through the preceding chapter before it was printed, remarked, "It is a pity you had not space to discuss what we really have to fear in life, and why." I quite agree that this is a subject which arises inevitably out of the one already considered—namely, the relation of religion to the world war. What are we afraid of; what ought we to be afraid of, if at all?

We are afraid of suffering, losing, and, in varying degrees, of harm coming to persons and interests we love. This is all that is the matter in England to-day, barring our own ignorance and wrong-headedness. We are afraid of pain in body or mind, of bereavement in soul or substance, of evil overtaking our country's cause or the few individuals we hold most near and dear. And such feeling is very natural, though, as I shall try to show, more or less illusory. We ought to get above it; we ought to be afraid of being afraid; we ought to seek to rise to the moral height whereon the only thing to be feared is to fail of being and doing our best. For, if we only knew it, this is all that is worth our solicitude; it includes every other good that could be thought or named. This is what life is for, to get the best out of us; it has no other meaning. And this

best carries with it ultimately all the benefits we have ever needed or desired, and probably much more than we have even glimpsed as yet. Pain is joy in the making; nothing can be lost that ever was ours; no evil can touch, much less injure, the truly essential things in man or nation. This is a great deal to say, but it can be justified from the experience of those who have lived their lives in terms of it in the past and are endeavouring to do so in the present. If ever we were on sure ground in the region of the unprovable—and what on earth is provable in the strict sense, good or bad?—it is here.

The primary cause of suffering is the vulnerability of the flesh. If bodies could not be hurt we should not suffer, in this way at any rate, and perhaps not in any other either. And yet it is this very susceptibility, this sensitiveness to physical pain, that has brought the race to where it is; it is the root of everything fine and gracious, noble and admirable, in our complex and imperfect nature. It is the heart of all the social virtues, imagination, feeling, poetry, art, and government; without it humanity as we know it to-day, in all that distinguishes it from the lower creation, could not have come to be. Physically we are less protected by nature than any other organism, more exposed at all points to the assaults of danger and disease, are more liable to perish of hunger and cold. We have had to bestir ourselves in order to live at all; we cannot comfortably take existence for granted; and it is to this, more than anything else, that we owe the development of faculty which has raised us to where we are in the scale of being; the incessant stimulus of

physical pain, and the necessity of scheming to avoid it, have given us our elaborate nervous organisation and the intelligence to make use of it. And it has brought out much more, though not yet so successfully; it has brought out our moral consciousness and all the spiritual longings that accompany it and which earth can never fully satisfy. On the other hand, it makes us feel the pull of the physical and to tend to overvalue it. Europe is fighting to-day because we rate so highly the importance of physical things; we individually and collectively want to get and keep as much as possible of material wealth in order to secure physical comfort. That is the meaning of Germany's bid for world power, mad as it is. What power could anybody have over anybody else but for the physical? What use would there be for governments but for the physical? What would lust of territory and commercial predominance amount to but for the physical? Suppose that at a stroke all necessity for feeding and clothing people could be made to disappear from the earth; suppose no quivering flesh could be torn by shot and shell or injured in any way by material means, Kaiserism and everything it stands for would be swept from the globe; nobody would have a word to say to it or pay the slightest heed to it. But, as I have already shown, something else might disappear too, and that would be the main dynamic of our moral energies. Not entirely, I admit, for what is gained is gained; man is man, and would not be man without idealism; and all our idealism, I contend, has been born of our pains and struggles. Take the urgency for these away, while allowing conditions otherwise to

remain much as they are, and, judging from all the indications of the past, our tendency would be to let go and sink down to sordid and uninspiring levels.

> "Then, welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
> Be our joys three-parts pain!
> Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
> Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!"

But—here is the main point I wish to impress upon my readers—nothing that touches the physical only touches the real man or anything that is his. If we could get this well into our minds it would set us free from most of our fears and dreads, not to speak of hopeless sorrow and blind despair. I do not say it would deliver us utterly from suffering, either bodily or mental; that is not to be expected while we are dwellers in the flesh; but I do say that it would take us right out of the paralysing dominion of terror—and only think what that would mean. Those were wise words of old, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." And finer still was the utterance of one who knew more about life and death than any who has ever yet worn human form: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after have no more that they can do." I admit the difficulty of realising this at all times and consistently acting up to it; I have often thought that if I had lived

in mediæval times I should probably have confessed anything on the rack that my tormentors chose to put into my mouth; and it is more than probable that if I saw my own child to-day in the foul hands of German Uhlans, and I powerless to save her from degradation, torture, and murder, I should be near to madness. We all know that such things as these have happened and are happening still. But, I reiterate it, we ought to know at the same time that nothing has been injured save the perishable outer shell of the victims we pity and would shed our blood to rescue from shame and wrong; no bestial hands have ever yet been laid upon the soul or ever will be. Death destroys nothing that belongs to us; he only withdraws it from our sight for a time. Behind the curtain of the visible and tangible all we have ever loved that was worthy of our love is waiting for us to claim it on a surer plane of possession; no one can be robbed of what is his in the spirit; it is his for ever.

> "The stars come nightly to the sky;
> The tidal wave comes to the sea;
> Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
> Can keep my own away from me."

I am not a spiritualist, nor have I ever seen a supernatural appearance in my life; but I am absolutely convinced, from testimony which I could not doubt, that communication between the hither and the yonder, between beings still in the flesh and the so-called dead, is more frequently made than most people suppose; and such communication is going on rapidly just now

owing to the great numbers that in the prime of their manhood are passing to the other side through the shock of battle. It may not be wise or healthy-minded to dwell much upon these supernormal occurrences, but no one could deny them who knows the evidence. And in any case what other evidence do we want than the evidence of our spiritual nature itself? The great difference in outlook between the oriental and ourselves is that the former assumes the soul as the foundation of all experience and is not at all sure of the reality of the material world, whereas we begin by assuming the reality of the material world and go on to speculate as to whether there is a soul to survive it. Surely the former assumption has as much to justify it as the latter.

What, then, is there to be afraid of in the turmoil and confusion through which the world is passing just now? Nothing whatever except to come down from what we individually know, whether any one tells us about it or not, to be our proper altitude of feeling and aim, and to play the coward or the traitor to our trust. And are we not in some danger of doing this? At the beginning of the war we were full of admiration for the spirit of the British people at home and abroad, proud of the loyalty and devotion of our fellow-subjects in every quarter of the world, full of self-congratulation at the unity of purpose manifest in all ranks and classes in face of the common enemy. We loudly announced our conviction that the doom of Prussian militarism was sealed, that the war it had so criminally provoked would bring about its speedy destruction and disillusion the German people who have dwelt so long under

its shadow, that the Berlin bureaucracy had clumsily blundered in every particular from its bullying diplomacy and cynical disregard of solemn pledges to its doctrine of frightfulness as demonstrated in martyred Belgium. There could only be one end to all this, we declared, and that would be to dictate the terms of peace in Berlin; we should have no half measures, no inconclusive peace; we were fighting the enemy of the human race, and all the moral forces of mankind were on our side. How does the situation look now? If there be unity of purpose anywhere it is not with us. Strikes, incompetence, and party factions have brought the nation to the very verge of ruin, and if they do not cease forthwith will precipitate us into it. There is only one mind and will in Germany, and that is the mind and will to destroy us; all its energies are concentrated upon that one end, and there is not the slightest sign of slackening or deviation of aim in regard thereto. What have we to counter it with? Only one thing, and if that fails all is lost—I mean the spirit of our people. It is strange how the spirit of a people can rise and fall from age to age. Compare the poor-spirited Greece of to-day with the Greece of Thermopylae and Salamis, of Leonidas and Pericles. We were a small and feeble folk in the spacious days of great Elizabeth compared with our numbers and resources to-day; but that tiny state broke the power of imperial Spain, which occupied then the same position relatively to the rest of the world that Germany occupies now. It was done by a great national spirit and nothing else, a spirit that could create and inspire fleets and armies, and without which fleets and armies

are of little worth. Never was a more glorious band of men than the mighty captains who stood around the throne of England in that supreme hour of our national destiny. To-day an even greater crisis is upon us: is our national spirit equal to it?—our daring, self-confidence, willingness to dedicate all we have and are to the salvation of our name and race? If so, the future of mankind is safe; if not, then the morrow is with tyranny, brutality, and lies, and liberty is trampled into dust. The grief-stricken father who, at the Zeppelin raid inquest the other day, dramatically summoned the Kaiser to meet him at the bar of God to answer for the crime of wholesale murder, thereby proclaimed what most people really believe in, his confidence in the moral order of the universe. In the long run this moral order is sure to be vindicated to the last detail, but how it will work out depends largely upon ourselves. The vast empires of Assyria and Babylon that oppressed little Judah are to-day no more than a name; they have perished utterly from the earth, whereas the Jew still persists and plays his part among the nations. But, oh, the agony and blood it cost the Jew to survive and find his soul! One day Germany and her tremendous war machine, and her cruel trust in material force, will be no more than a name, an evil tradition of the past; but where will England be? When people protest that we could not lose in this contest because our cause is the cause of liberty and justice, I answer that that does not follow. History has another tale to tell—namely, that the better cause may for a time have to go under till

its adherents are worthier to sustain it. Will that be our fate in this contest? I do not think so, but we must set our house in order and quickly. Every man to his post! All for the dear motherland whether we live or die!

CHAPTER V

WAR AND SACRIFICE

RECENTLY I was the guest at mess of the staff of one of our field hospitals somewhere in France, and the conversation turned, as usual, upon the genesis of the war. We exhausted the list of Germany's misdemeanours in the fashion familiar to the world in general and Britons in particular, discussed Nietzsche and Treitschke *ad lib.*, apportioned the blame between the professors and the military, waxed warm upon the point as to whether the Teutonic swelled-head resulting from the victories of 1870 had not more to do with producing the bellicose professors than the professors had to do with producing the German spirit to-day, and so on and so forth. Frequent reference was made to the published diplomatic correspondence as exposing Germany's criminal designs upon the possessions of her neighbours and her arrogant determination to trample upon the liberties of the world. Everybody knows the kind of thing that was being said; it is being said everywhere except in Germany from hour to hour wherever men meet and talk. Presently, however, a young officer at the far end of the table spoke up. "All you are saying is probably true enough," he remarked; "and we have heard every

bit of it many times before. But the deepest reason of all for this war none of you have mentioned yet, and it simply is that human beings like fighting and are never content for long without a fight." Instantly conversation became controversy; I took no further part in it but sat and watched while the young Adonis who had flung the challenge—he was more like a Viking, by the way: fair-haired, blue-eyed, and of a tremendous height—developed his theme with animation and a considerable measure of success. He maintained that man cannot live without fighting, that there is nothing to be deprecated in the struggle for existence, that everything good in us is more or less associated with our fighting qualities, and that whenever life becomes colourless and commonplace, denuded of the heroic virtues, an explosion of some sort must take place to compel us to put forth our utmost again in the never-ceasing effort to grasp the unattainable and rise to superhuman planes of feeling and worth.

One could not help agreeing mentally that there was much to be said for this view. That it does not take everything into account is obvious, but it suggests certain spiritual values which call for special attention in the period of strife and tumult through which we are living. I cannot think it really true to say that any ordinary civilised man would deliberately choose to precipitate a conflict like the present for the mere sake of enjoying a fight; it is too horrible for that; but once the fight is started he becomes conscious of demands upon his moral nature of which, perhaps, he was previously unaware. Even in time of peace life

is none too easy for most people; but in time of war all its customary securities and incentives are swept away and we stand naked to the blast of calamity, hearing at the same time the call to high endeavour as we might never hear it in our whole history otherwise. And the curious thing about this call is that even the most unlikely people will respond to it and fling every earthly treasure behind them in so doing. Willingly, gladly, without compulsion of any kind save their own inner mandate, they will forsake home, comfort, the prospect of a successful career, and will imperil life itself for they hardly know what so long as the imperative comes in this form. No one need envy the coward and the skulker, the man who hears the call and refuses to obey because he is afraid of his skin being hurt or who is base enough to want to take advantage of the safety purchased for him by his brother's blood; but to me the truly impressive thing is to note how comparatively few of him there are. In Europe to-day hundreds of thousands of young men are maimed for life; in our own country we shall be meeting them by and by at every turn. Tens of thousands are slain, and these are of every rank and class. They have all been down into the very pit of hell and endured pains unspeakable. Why? Yesterday I met a man of ample means who has enlisted in the ranks and been serving for months amid scenes of privation and terror that beggar description. What does he do it for? Why does anybody do it? Three millions of the finest of our British youth have volunteered for the front, and those who love them dearly have let them go. Why should they if

not because of a feeling we all have, which can scarcely justify itself to the reason—it is rather an instinct, a spiritual perception, than an articulate idea—that what we are fighting for is more of eternity than of time? We feel that personal sacrifice to the uttermost is demanded of us and that we cannot hold back. We are making it for England, it is true; but is there not more than England at stake, more even than the liberties of mankind? I am sure of it, and I am sure we all know it, and that is why our sons and brothers go out so bravely to meet death and the rest of us steel our hearts to speed them to the ordeal. I have already said that but for the physical there would be no such fight possible, that what we are immediately fighting for is to win or hold so much of the earth's surface, that world power could have no significance but for the flesh and all that pertains to the flesh. And this is true; but it is also true that the fight is not for the flesh alone, and that every man taking part in it is aware of the fact. No man would give his life for what was of the flesh alone; and deep down in every one of us is the urge to give ourselves as fully as possible at the bidding of the ineffable somewhat that we feel has the right to require the sacrifice. That is what men are found willing to die for, though they are not always equally willing to live for it. It is a spiritual, not a material thing. Sometimes it expresses itself as patriotism, sometimes as religious zeal, sometimes as the impulse to save the life of somebody else, as when a lifeboatman braves the storm to save a shipwrecked company, or a rescue party goes down into the choke-damp of a coal mine after an explosion to

bring up the imprisoned survivors; but always and everywhere the impulse is the same; it is the impulse to lay one's life on the altar of a dimly apprehended but unescapable divine reality behind and above the flux of sense, majestic, eternal, insistent, compelling. And in nothing, perhaps, is the immediacy of this impulse so apparent as in war.

Doubtless this is why great thinkers and seers have been disposed to glorify war despite its brutality and ghastliness. It is the inwardness of Ruskin's great saying, reluctantly made, that nations are saved by war and destroyed by peace; and of that even greater passage in De Quincey concerning which a correspondent wrote to remind me the other day—

"Under circumstances that may exist, and have existed, war is a *positive* good; not relative merely, or negative, but positive. A great truth it was which Wordsworth uttered, whatever might be the expansion which he allowed to it, when he said that

> 'God's most perfect instrument
> In working out a pure intent
> Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter:
> Yea, carnage is His daughter.'

There is a mystery in approaching this aspect of the case which no man has read fully. War has a deeper and more ineffable relation to hidden grandeurs in man than has yet been deciphered. To execute judgment of retribution upon outrages offered to human rights or to human dignity, to vindicate the sanctities of the altar and the sanctities of the hearth: these are functions of human greatness which war has

many times assumed, and many times faithfully discharged. But, behind all these, there towers dimly a greater. The great phenomenon of war it is, this and this only, which keeps open in man a spiracle—an organ of respiration—for breathing a transcendent atmosphere, and dealing with an idea that else would perish: viz. the idea of mixed crusade and martyrdom, doing and suffering, that finds its realisation in a battle such as that of Waterloo—viz. a battle fought for interests of the human *race*, felt even where they are not understood; so that this tutelary Angel of Man, when he traverses such a dreadful field, when he reads the distorted features, counts the ghastly ruins, sums the hidden anguish, and the harvests

'Of horror breathing from the silent ground,'

nevertheless, speaking as God's messenger, 'blesses it and calls it very good.' "

This is language that I could not wholly endorse; I am not prepared to admire war in this indiscriminate fashion and account it of God. It is only of God while men's hearts are hard. But facts are facts, and it is the fact, undeniable and often sublime, that as humanity has been constituted up to the present, war has been the means, more than any other agency, of bringing out on the grand scale that truth of sacrifice without which flesh can never be made to serve the ends of spirit and the kingdom of the soul be won. This could be realised without war if only the race as a whole could be lifted to the requisite level. It often has been realised without war in individual cases, but

never for long on the wider basis of the communal life. Please God, it will one day be universally realised without war, and when that is so the cross of Christ will have won its final victory. For when people speak of religion as imperilled by the war they know not what they say; the very central principle of Christianity is that which the war with all its horrors has forced us to lift our faces from the flesh-pots and visualise afresh—namely, that life is only gained in proportion as it is laid down at the call of the higher-than-self.

> "A picket frozen on duty,
> A mother starved for her brood,
> Socrates drinking the hemlock,
> And Jesus on the rood;
> And the millions who, humble and nameless,
> The straight, hard pathway trod—
> Some of us call it duty,
> And others call it God."[1]

It needs no war to bring this home to us if only we have eyes to see and a mind to understand. Sacrifice is always the same in essence, whatever be the occasion that calls it forth. In a play produced by Sir Herbert Tree some years ago, entitled *False Gods*, this truth was presented very forcibly. The scene was laid in ancient Egypt, and one of the principal characters was a young girl who was to be thrown into the Nile as a sacrifice to the gods in order to secure a plentiful harvest. The character was well played, and what struck me most in the performance was the way the girl was represented as going to her death. On her face was a look of holy rapture and supersensuous joy. So intent was

she on her self-oblation that she passed her weeping lover by without so much as seeing him; her gaze was fixed upon a sterner bridegroom. Should we call this superstition and wasted nobleness? Not so: there is no wasted nobleness. It matters little to what immediate object a sacrifice is made so that it be the best we can see. Perhaps none of the things we are willing to suffer and die for to-day are intrinsically any worthier than those which awakened the Egyptian girl's heroism, but they have served their purpose in so far as they are the medium through which the eternal makes its demand upon our uttermost. We rise or fall by the nature of our response thereto. We die to live; we lose to find. And having passed the portals of the great self-offering to the Ideal, come in what guise it may, we find that, after all, there is no such thing as sacrifice in the sense of permanent loss or impoverishment. We only lay down a lesser to grasp a larger good; we surrender the part to possess the whole. That is what our dead heroes have already found on the other side of the red mist of war; and that is what we who weep for them will one day find too when we go to join them in the light that casts no shadow.

CHAPTER VI

PESSIMISM

(Written from the Western front towards the end of 1915)

HERE on the table before me is a pile of newspapers, French and English. I have been reading both—the English with reluctance, the French with avidity. I want to see how the war is going, as far as the newspapers can tell us about it; and over here we are all hungry for news as you are in England. But I notice one curious contrast in the tone of these two sets of journals: the English are all angrily pessimistic, the French soberly optimistic. This is why I take up an English paper with apprehension and something of reluctance, and why I go to the French for a corrective. Perhaps not all the English papers are pessimistic nor all the French optimistic, but I am bound to say that most that have come my way, and they are not few, may fairly be thus described. Why the contrast? for contrast there undoubtedly is. The French are not cock-a-hoop, but neither are they depressing; the English were cock-a-hoop not so long ago, and now they seem to have formed a combine for the special purpose of disheartening everybody. Even those—I speak with all reserve as only having seen a limited number—which make it their business to counter the anti-

Government tendencies of the rest seem to do so with a mournful air as who should say, "Well, at any rate, they shall not be able to accuse us of undue cheerfulness about prospects; we shall wear as sad a visage as they; we shall be careful not to overestimate our chances in any wise." What on earth *is* the matter? Once on this side of the Channel I find myself in an entirely different atmosphere, psychologically speaking, from that of the London I left. There at home apparently you are still quarrelling and calling each other names, still demanding the resignation of this or that minister or of the whole cabinet, still putting the worst possible construction upon what you don't understand. Here the people are quiet, calm, restrained, determined as ever but without thought of harassing their civil or military administrations. I pick up a French paper and read of the operations in the Balkans or somewhere else; I see that matters are grave, but I read encouraging words, words of hope and confidence that the best is being done that can be done to deal with the situation. Next day I pick up the English screamer of the same date, relating the same events, describing exactly the same situation, and if I had not read the French the night before I should think all was lost and that the empire was on the very verge of dissolution. The French editor gives careful reasons for the general view he puts before his readers; the English editor does the same, or says he does, but the conclusions are diametrically opposite.

Now I cannot think that this is because the French censorship is more strict than the British, and that

editors are not allowed to write in this country what they would dearly like to write and would write if only they had the same chance as their English *confrères*. If that is all, for goodness' sake let us have the French censorship established in London without delay. But it is not all; it is not the case in the least; the explanation must be sought otherwhere. Does not the English mood originate with a certain group of journals whose policy is directed from one source, and all the rest, like sheep, feel more or less bound to follow. Is there any other country in the world, I wonder, that would tolerate such a state of things? Perhaps it is to our credit that we do, but we do it at a cost. Any foreigner would be justified in supposing that the nation had got into a jumpy condition and was prepared for some wild-cat scheme of revolution. I don't believe it; I think I know my countrymen too well; but at the moment it really does look as though Mr. Bernard Shaw were right in his whimsical portraiture of John Bull as anything but the staid, stolid, level-headed person he is supposed to be—nervous, indeed, and excitable to a degree, emotional and sentimental—whereas the Gaul, so far from being flighty, easily elated and depressed, voluble and blatant, and all the rest of it, is nothing if not cool, self-possessed, master of his fate, and able to take long views of the future as the Anglo-Saxon has never done.

But consider the effect upon our troops, not to speak of the spirits of those at home. You may be cheerful by nature and principle, but it needs a good deal of resolution to stand up against a continual

deluge of dismal prophecies and scolding discontent with what has or has not been done in the field up to date. Tommy reads the newspapers as regularly as you do, perhaps more so, for there is not much else to read. They are sent out to the seat of war just as systematically as they are sent all over the land at home. And he does not like all this grousing; he says so; it is not the kind of pabulum he wants. And, bear in mind, the Tommy of to-day is not the Tommy of old, not a professional soldier. He is a man who has left the desk, the forge, the loom, the mart, all the comforts and securities of home life to go and fight our battles and keep the foe from our gates. He need not have gone; he did not have to be fetched; he went because England needed strong hands and stout hearts to defend her, and he could not hold back. He is a man who yesterday sat by our firesides or worked with us at the bench or in the counting-house, and we know him well. Is it fair to discourage him, to minimise his achievements, to take the heart out of him by grumbling at the slowness of his progress? God in heaven, I wonder what the Germans think about that! If they hate us to-day with a black and fiendish hatred it is because this new Tommy of ours has so unexpectedly and effectively barred *their* progress. They never reckoned with a voluntary army of three million men of England's best blood, the biggest voluntary army, remember, that the world has ever seen. Where would Europe have been to-day without that army, not to speak of our glorious fleet, as glorious to-day as it ever was? The French know it and appreciate it, I can tell you.

They know well enough what would have become of them by now if there had been no Britons to stand by their side. It is no disparagement to the Tommy of old to say that the new man is quite equal to him in all essentials. The Tommy of old held back the Huns like a hero in the long retreat from Mons, but there are not many of him left now. Had that little British force not been there during that terrible first onrush of the overwhelming German hordes there would have been no need to talk of how much or how little we have done since, for the campaign would have been over in a few weeks, with France possibly down and out before she was ready to get in her famous counter-stroke. We were more promptly on the spot than our allies and bore the brunt of the contest against such odds as no army has had to face since on any front. We have done an hundred-fold more than we ever undertook to do or thought of doing a year and a half ago. Granted, you say, but not more than was necessary, not more than our allies have a right to expect now to save the situation for us all; we are fighting the most desperate fight of our whole existence as a people, and are in the deadliest peril; is not our utmost called for and at once? Yes, yes, but why take way off the ship by badgering the captain and the men in the engine-room? Let them alone and do your own bit; you are not likely to improve on them by bringing new and untried men on to the bridge while the storm is raging. Try to conceive the miracle of this new army of ours that has arisen out of nothing within the space of a year. See how it has baffled an enemy

that for forty years has been thinking about nothing else but war and organisation for war. Understand that it is not we but Germany that will have to look out when the supreme tussle comes. Man for man, our men are better than their foes are now, and will be more so as time goes on. The Balkans? I know all that can be said about our diplomatic failures and the rest of it, by those who do not know and cannot know the facts from the inside. Perhaps when the whole story is told our blunders in this respect will not turn out to have been so very bad, after all. Perhaps before long Germany may have cause to rue the day she tied herself up in the Balkans. I know all the other dangers people are whispering about, dangers in our rear out there, dangers of disaffection among subject races who have hitherto held us invincible and now see that we are not. Well, let us have the whole truth; we shall be none the worse for knowing it. We are not finished with yet, and would not be if all the woes imagined by all the dismal Jimmies came true together. Mistakes we have made, heaps of them—tragic mistakes some of them—and we shall make more before we have done, but we are not going under, and I don't suppose there is a soul in the world who really believes it.

It is to the quality of our men that I pin my faith. It does one good to be among them and to witness their invincible cheerfulness, gaiety, indomitable spirit in face of wounds and death. These men are not going to be beaten, you may depend upon it. Simple, honest, boyish, without a trace of self-consciousness, they make it a point of honour never to

whine at anything, and they never do. The harder conditions may be the louder rise laughter and song from their midst. The French contrast with them rather curiously in these ways just now. They are grave, silent, undemonstrative—an exact reversal of what the world has grown to expect from them. There is no slackening of determination anywhere, but it is strange to find the phlegmatic Briton exhibiting the very characteristics which are supposed to belong more especially to the French race, whereas the Frenchman has for the time being assumed another air. It is rare, indeed, to meet a French regiment making any demonstration on the march; they tramp on quiet and steady, without song or jest. The British Tommy, on the other hand, never stops making fun and melody. The day I landed I met two British regiments swinging along at a good smart pace towards the sea, raising no end of din as they went through the streets, calling out good-humoured remarks to the people at the windows, chaffing one another, cheering at intervals, joining in some popular chorus occasionally. It was sheer light-heartedness that was thus finding vent in one and all; the only grave face I saw was that of the officer in front, and his eyes were twinkling. Naturally I thought they must be going home on leave, so I asked if it were so. Not a bit of it. They were not going to the sea but to the train, and within an hour or two would be in the trenches. I wished I could have made the editor of the *Daily Mail* do a route march alongside of them; it would have been a tonic to his shattered nerves.

It was bitterly cold in camp the other Sunday morning, a cutting north-easter blowing and torrents of sleet falling. I had to take church parade and was waiting the summons shiveringly. Not being in a state of health just now to run risks I made for the only fire I could find—namely, that in the cooking range of a camp kitchen. You should have seen that kitchen after a few score muddy feet had been across it, and then realise that practically every man doing duty in it was as accustomed to home comforts as I was. They insisted on placing a chair for me in the warmest corner near the stove, where I stood a good chance of being roasted along with the joint. And then the fun began. Not far away a French youth was bargaining with the corporal—about eggs, I think it was—and the merriment that ensued over the efforts of the two to understand each other's language was side-splitting. Jacques said something about "obligé." "Lizzie?" roared the corporal. "Don't you come trotting out your Lizzies here. We're respectable, we are. None of your Lizzies for me. But p'raps you mean 'lazy'? Right you are, sonny, right first time. Lazy we are, sure enough, every man of us, but we never get a proper chance to develop our talent, and not much likelihood of it, either, from what I can see. Compron that, eh? Have a cigarette (sticking it between the Frenchman's teeth). Why don't you say 'mercy,' you blighter? Have I got to teach you your own language and your manners as well?" Roars of laughter greeted each sally, the Frenchman's loudest of all. A large iron ladle greatly assisted the corporal

in punctuating his points. My description is only the feeblest attempt to convey the actual comicality and joyousness of the whole interlude. "Mercy" was in frequent requisition as the nearest approach Tommy could make to "merci"; it came out in nearly every sentence. "Bong Jewer," they shouted, as their visitor took his leave with many bows. Tommy bowing back was the funniest incident of all.

The psychological differences between the two races are continually obvious, however. I am not sure that we should ever fully understand the French people or they us. We can like and amuse each other, but that is another matter. Some little time back, in illustration of this, a few of our soldiers went to purchase sweets at a shop in the village not far away. While the proprietress was serving them her wounded son came out, and, seeing his English brothers-in-arms, drew himself up, struck an attitude, and, pointing to the lapel of his coat whereon the coveted distinction gleamed, exclaimed in dramatic accents, "Médaille militaire moi!" The Tommies instantly laughed at him—good-naturedly, of course, but to his utter bewilderment. His action was as characteristically French as it was absolutely un-English. I got the story at second-hand but have no doubt it is true.

All hail to Tommy, and confusion to those who would make his task harder! Get rid of the grumblers and back him up with all our united strength and confidence. And the best way to do that is to back up those who have the responsibility of leadership in their hands.

CHAPTER VII

THE HIGHER COMMAND

HERE is a coincidence worth telling about. I was just sitting down to write something on the above subject when a letter came in containing the following story told on the authority of one of our wounded Australian heroes. He says the bravest man he ever saw was a Wesleyan military chaplain. He was on one of the barges which were landing men from our troop-ships at the Dardanelles. A man was shot down. The chaplain made to dash to the rescue and bring the wounded soldier back to safety, but a Catholic priest standing near grabbed hold of him, saying, "You mustn't think of it; it is madness; you are going to certain death." The Wesleyan shook off the restraining hand, replying, "I have got my orders, and they come from a higher command than yours, and I'm going." He went, and was struck by a bullet while in the act of beginning his work of mercy. Instantly the priest sprang after him, but the officer in charge of the landing party called out, "Stay where you are; I forbid your going; we are losing too many men." The priest calmly went on, only turning his head to say as he passed, "Did you not hear what my Protestant comrade said? I too have got my orders—from the higher command."

Within a few moments he lay dead beside his brother of the Cross.

This is a fine story, only one of many similar stories that one is hearing on every hand and most of which will never be printed. It is amazing how splendid men can be, and women too, under the stress of a great demand such as the present hour is making upon us all. The Prime Minister told us recently that before the war we did not know we possessed so much of this wonderful moral quality in the nation and the empire. I confess I did not, and most of those with whom I have talked about it agree that they did not either. We all wondered, everybody wondered, whether the Briton of to-day, at home or overseas, had quite the grit of his ancestors. It only needed a great world crisis to show it, and here it is as of yore.

But the thing I am thinking most of at the moment in connection with it is the strange compelling power possessed by this inner imperative, this higher command, that makes ordinary everyday folk capable of such mighty deeds. Where does it come from and what is it? It is a queer thing, this higher command, and takes the most curious forms. A reckless, devil-may-care sailor is taken prisoner by dervishes and told that he may save his life by forswearing Christianity and becoming convert to Islam. He says he will see them damned first, and dies a martyr to the faith he has never greatly honoured by his life. Now, why on earth should a man do that? He might very well shelter himself under the plea of necessity and bide his time. But, no, he will have

no truck with the alternative; something inside him will not let him, something whose condemnation he is much more afraid of than he is of death. I have just been talking to a wounded private soldier lying in a tent hospital. He is only a boy, and a delicate boy at that, but here he is, after seven months in the trenches, smashed up for life, if he ever succeeds in getting well, which I doubt, and the busy, kindly military doctors and nurses doubt too. He comes from Lancashire—Wigan, I think he said—and he looks it even if his speech did not betray him, such a strong face he has and such an independent, manly mode of addressing his visitor. Something of his story and his views of life has come out in our intercourse. He worked in an iron foundry but has never earned good wages. His health has been partly to blame for that, but circumstances have been to blame also, and he is rather resentful about it and curses our unjust social system with all his might. Undoubtedly it has been hard on him; he has known little but struggle and dull drudgery all his days, and even starvation has threatened him more than once. He does not remember his father; his mother was early left a widow with a young family to bring up, and wondrously she did it, as so many intrepid women similarly placed have had to do and will have to do still more when war has taken its toll complete. He seems to have no thought now but for his mother, whereby I can guess what kind of mother she must have been—"mutther" he calls her in his broad Lancashire dialect, or the nearest approach I can make to it with the pen. He wishes

she wouldn't " wurry "; he will be " aw reet." That he will, however it goes. Poor mother! She has another lad, he says, lying in a bloody grave somewhere on the Belgian frontier, and there are no more left now to look after her as good sons should—only daughters, one of them a permanent invalid, to weep with her and battle on alone. He would like to get better because of this, but has got " t' parson " to write and cheer her up and tell her it will be " aw reet " anyhow. And then he falls to talking with extraordinary bitterness of the totally unnecessary hardship of the lot of the toiling poor at home in England — foolish, luxurious, pleasure-loving, ill-directed, scrambling, shambling England. He is an intelligent youth and knows what he is talking about; he has read a good deal and thought more, and takes a fairly active part in local labour politics, or did before the war. Religion he appears to have left mostly to " mutther."

Here again I am filled with wonder and respect. I ask myself what England has ever done for this young fellow that he should leave his mother to suffer and mourn while he goes to fight and die for motherland—or is it something else of which motherland is but the most convenient symbol? I don't think he knows himself, although he is under no illusions about the course he has chosen. I put the question to him. " Well, ye see," he answers slowly, " it's a man's job. A man canna slink and hide when there's a job o' this sort goin'." He could give no further explanation. Here were two commands, two

ideals if you like, mutually incompatible; one, very much more than the other, exceedingly dangerous and disagreeable; but he knew which he had to obey, and he knew without being able to give a very clear reason for his choice. Dimly apprehended, perhaps, was the knowledge that in fighting England's battle just now he was fighting for a greater than England, for all that is sweet, and dear, and wholesome in human lot, for the future of the entire race, for things better and more worthful than good wages and abundant leisure, or even the refinements of life that these can provide, for liberty, comradeship, democratic ideals as opposed to Prussianism and all its blighting, terrifying menace. Was that it? I cannot tell; I think so; but I feel also—nay, I am sure—that behind all this is a motive, an incentive, that never can be completely rationalised, a needs-must which has more of heaven than of earth in it. We may be willing to die for one thing to-day and another to-morrow, but it is always the same thing in the end, the Eternal Right. We never know what it is, but it is always calling to us, always calling, and when we hear the summons our dearest treasures drop unheeded from our hands and we turn with averted mien from the contemplation of our heart's desires to lift our gaze to the shining heights whereon a glory beckons that is not of earth alone. As Francis Thompson phrases it—

> "I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
> Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
> From the hid battlements of Eternity;

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith."

In all of us there is this strange, mystical susceptibility, call it what you will, this urge to lay all we have and are upon the altar of some ineffable ideal that we feel has the right to demand our uttermost. I know of nothing that so fully demonstrates man's spiritual nature; it is the one great fact that differentiates us from the brutes. All history through you find it running. On the one hand you have man selfish, greedy, earth-bound, cunning, false, and sordid in his aims; on the other, at repeated intervals, in great and solemn hours, comes this austere appeal for all we have to give, and we promptly give it, joyously, willingly, without thought of reward, and derive a greater satisfaction from that self-giving than from all other kinds of gain put together. It is deep, mysterious, elusive, this stress of the spirit, but we all know it unmistakably, as all generations have known it. Perhaps there is nothing so strong in human nature as this impulse to fling ourselves away at the bidding of we know not what, the something ever blessed that incarnates itself now in this course or objective and now in that. Assuredly there is nothing so exalting within the totality of human experience. Show me the man or the nation without it and I will show you man or nation damned and lost. The lower command, the command of

expediency and common sense, the command of conventionality and established order, or the dictate of self-love insists, Be tranquil, remain secure, jeopardise nothing, disturb nobody, hold on with care to what you possess, take no risks; the higher command thrusts all prudentialisms aside and cries, Give me all, I will have nothing less. It is madness to listen if we want to be safe, but we do listen and always will. And does the specific requirement through which the call comes ever matter in itself? Hardly at all, I should think; what matters is our response. Leonidas and his Spartans perish to a man at Thermopylæ—for what? For King Constantine and the degenerate nation he rules to-day? In God's name, no; it would have mattered little for hundreds of years past if the Greece they saved had been wiped off the map. They thought they were dying for Greece—and so they were, for the Greece of the moment, for the Greece from which we have inherited our ideals of the beautiful and gracious in life—but if they were not dying for more than Greece their death was a tragedy unrelieved. They were dying for the soul of man, and to an extent they must have been conscious of it, dying for a world unborn and a greater world unseen; upon their own triumph of soul they rose to the threshold of that which is beyond manhood as manhood is beyond the beast and the clod; they achieved more than they understood or tried for. People have died before now for what to our perceptions was not worth a moment's discomfort, but we are wrong and they were right. An ancient city is besieged, and the oracle goes forth

that the only way to save it is for the king's virgin daughter, or some one else of equal rank and worth, the best and fairest that the community can produce, to be offered in burnt sacrifice upon the walls. The girl consents and goes to her doom amid the awe-stricken prayers and blessings of the multitude of onlookers. What gods were they that required this deed before they would interfere between these folk and their enemies without? None; the offering placated no blood-drinking deity; but it achieved its purpose all the same. The elevation of soul required in the one who willingly died for the rest was communicated more or less to them all, and for ever; who cares now whether the city fell or not? When Edmond Campion, after being bruised and broken on the rack, was compelled to sit for three hours arguing intricate theological propositions with his Puritan judges before being dragged through the streets on a hurdle to be hanged at Tyburn, the martyr thought he was witnessing for the truth of God, the truth to which all Christendom would speedily return. Was he? He died like a hero, no man could have died better, but would it have been well for the world that the Cause represented by the Inquisition and the Spanish Armada should have prevailed over that of Frobisher and Drake? I trow not. Yet Campion died for England as surely as they, for that spiritual England which had been slowly built up through the centuries, on the other side of death as on this, may be, by the glorious self-devotion of her sons.

There are clever men who tell us that the higher

command is only a mode of what is commonly called conscience, and that conscience is only the survival in the individual of the instinct for social self-preservation. It has been found in generations past that some forms of action tend to social detriment and others to social benefit; the former have social penalties attached to them and the latter social approval, so that in time everybody comes to feel that the one kind of act is blameworthy and the other praiseworthy—hence conscience. But that will not do; it does not explain sufficiently. It does not explain why the social pioneer so often has to take a line in direct defiance of the accepted standards of his time. "Here stand I, I can none other" has been the testimony of many a reformer besides Luther; expressed or implied it is the testimony of them all. But the higher command I am writing about can scarcely be classed as conscience; it has affinities with it but goes beyond it. Conscience warns or inhibits, marks this wrong and the other right, is concerned with "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not." But when the higher command comes in like a flood it swallows up, transmutes, sweeps away all merely moral maxims in its torrential course. Right is comparatively seldom a clear issue; there is nearly always a conflict of duties apparent. But once let the higher command be heard, heard with that trumpet note in it which all the world knows so well, and these scruples and balancings are forgotten, and an exultant joy in losing everything, forsaking everything, crucifying everything dear to the natural man takes their place. We no longer

ask, Is this right or is that wrong? We overleap all such alternatives. We are plunged, merged, lost in the transcendental claim; we forget all else or only remember it to consecrate it to the one high end; if we had a thousand lives they should all go the same way, and home, kindred, hearts' beloved, all should follow with it. Witness Serbia to-day, old men, sick men, women, girls, little children dying with arms in their hands. This is Serbia's hour of agony and glory. Her people are not merely being defeated, they are being exterminated. They need not be, and at first sight one wonders why they should consent to be; all they have got to do is to throw down their arms and submit to the invader; they might have to suffer a little more, endure an ignominious subjection, but at least this tide of slaughter would be stayed. And they will not; the world with parted lips and straining eyes beholds that they will not. And yet these very people, not so long ago, were mean, ignorant, chaffering, thieving petty traders and pig-breeders. Any who have had to deal with them know they were no models of all the virtues. They could trifle with conscience or silence it altogether with the best (or worst) of us.

So it ever is. The higher command tears the meanness out of us like a tornado sweeping through a smelly township and hurling all its foulness away in a moment on the wings of the blast. It transforms our whole being — unless we deliberately close our ears and bury ourselves out of reach of its pealing summons. You do not recognise these giants of the storm? they are the very men who yesterday shared

your petty sins and pettier pleasures, these men who are to-day behaving like demi-gods. They have been touched by the magic of the higher command and all their little vices have dropped from them like withered leaves when the burst of springtime comes. They have broken their fetters and clasped hands with the immortals.

CHAPTER VIII

ABOUT PACIFISM

(Written before Compulsion became law)

THE time is drawing rapidly near when it may be necessary for the Prime Minister to make good his word and exercise compulsion upon those men of military age who have not voluntarily joined the colours to defend their country in her hour of need. If Lord Haldane is right, and he ought to know, special legislation may not even be necessary for this step, it being a maxim of the British Constitution from the earliest times to the present day that it is the duty of every freeman to bear arms in the nation's cause when called upon to do so by the nation's voice. I for one devoutly hope that we shall never have to resort to compulsion; it would take away something from the splendour of our national achievements in the field and elsewhere since the war began if the confession had to be made that voluntarism had broken down and that there were still a considerable number of England's able-bodied sons who refused to fight for her.

But if compulsion does come we may have difficulties, so I am told, with some—there cannot surely be very many—who are conscientiously opposed to the shedding of blood whether in their

country's cause or any other, and whether that cause is a so-called righteous one or not. No cause can be righteous, these persons would argue, which involves strife and the exercise of brute force between one people and another any more than between one individual and another. War, they hold, is a barbarous and wicked method of settling international disputes; it is, as Mr. Norman Angell would say, irrelevant to the issue; but even if it were not, even if its cost to the victors were not out of all proportion greater than any material gain likely to be achieved, it is still reprehensible from every ethical point of view; better lose all than fight to keep any. So reasoning, certain among these good people are prepared to undergo imprisonment, spoliation of their goods, and perhaps death itself rather than join the army.

There are other people who are perplexed in mind about this question from the purely Christian standpoint, though not a few of them are already doing their utmost, in the army and out of it, to help to defeat the Germans and save Europe. I had an instance of this brought to my notice some months ago. A fine young fellow who had just enlisted said to me: "I feel I must do my bit for the old country along with others; we are all up against it, and I just cannot hang back while other men are being smashed and killed in a cause that is as much mine as theirs. But I am quite well aware that what I am doing is not Christian, but the very opposite, if we are to do what Jesus Christ told us to do."

Now is that really so? This is a question that

ought to be frankly and honestly faced, for they are not all cowards who put it. Is it generally known, I wonder, that certain Quakers, whose pacifist principles forbid them to fight, have from the beginning of the war been engaged in the hazardous service of mine-sweeping in the North Sea and elsewhere? Persons who are willing to jeopardise their own lives in such an intrepid fashion as this are entitled to full respect in differing from their neighbours on the subject of war in general. Ought a Christian ever, under any circumstances, to fight or approve of fighting? Can a true follower of the Prince of Peace consent to or take part in the shedding of human blood on the battlefield or, indeed, anywhere? I believe it was Dr. Salter of Bermondsey, a man whose self-sacrificing labours among the poor command universal admiration, who said somewhere with reference to the present colossal struggle, that it was impossible to imagine Jesus bayoneting anybody or tearing human flesh and bones to pieces with explosives. A good many people feel that way; it would shock them to think of their Lord under any such aspect. This troubles them, as well it might, for what is out of character for Christ, what would be wrong for Him, ought to be wrong for us—on this question, anyhow. And then there are His recorded words. Everybody knows them. He inculcated non-resistance, the turning of the other cheek to the smiter, and substituted the law of love for that of the resentment of injuries. What are we to say about this? I should not like to say what some of the German divines appear to find to say on the subject. Pastor

Löber of Leipzig, for instance, appears to have been preaching on Christianity and War and putting views before his congregation that ought to please the Prussian and the Turk. Every one, he maintains, serves God who makes the blood of an enemy flow, and it is because he is thus serving God that he can reckon on God's blessing. The admonition of the New Testament to return good for evil cannot be applied in war. In war evil must be met by evil, and wherever possible by greater and increased evil. War demands Old Testament severity, not the mildness of the new dispensation. He is to be praised and envied who sees his enemies perish. This, he concludes, is only another side of love for one's country, this desire for thorough revenge on the malicious enemy. "We beflag our houses, we ring our bells, and sing 'Now thank we all our God' when countless multitudes of Russians meet a terrible death in the Masurian swamps, or when two thousand seamen are plunged to the bottom of the ocean by our submarines. And such expressions of gratitude and joy are genuinely German and genuinely Christian." These are Pastor Löber's words, remember, not mine, and are, indeed, the genuine German blend of vindictive murderousness with abominable pietism. They remind one of *Punch's* sarcastic paraphrase of the first German emperor's letters to his wife on the débâcle of the French armies in 1870–71.

> "I write to tell you, dear Augusta,
> We've had another awful buster:
> Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below,
> Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

But we need not emulate this blasphemous tosh. The question for us is whether it is ever right to meet force with force. We have to look to something besides the letter of Scripture here. You can prove almost anything from Scripture, and the mere citing of isolated texts is a profitless proceeding. We have to look at Scripture as interpreted by the mind of the Church during nineteen centuries. From the first the right of the State to make use of force, even to the taking of human life, was admitted by the Church, and from that admission she has never deviated. This must include the right, even the duty under certain circumstances, to make war; for the principle thus set forth extends much further than the coercion of the subject. If the State has the right to judge and condemn a criminal within her own borders—and who would question it?—she has the right to resist unjust aggression from without or even to interfere on behalf of the oppressed and down-trodden beyond the area of her sovereign jurisdiction. Surely in taking this ground—which she did even in New Testament times, as we see from the Pauline epistles—the Church has all along known the mind of her Lord. Is it so certain that Jesus would not have sanctioned the taking of human life? What distinction is there between the taking of life and the employment of any other method than that of moral suasion in the overthrow of iniquity? and it is as clear as clear can be that our Lord did contemplate bringing force to bear in the long run upon human wrong-doing; His teaching about the last things leaves no room for doubt about this, *and the force was to be*

employed by Himself. People seem to forget this when talking about the example of Jesus. It was only up to a point that He meant to tolerate men's wickedness or appeal to their better nature; beyond that point He declared He would overthrow it with a strong hand, and it makes not the slightest difference to the question at issue that He expected to be supported by heavenly rather than earthly legions in so doing; the principle is just the same; there is to be a consecrated use of force to counter and overthrow force enlisted on the side of evil. Nor can we absolutely restrict the participation in the struggle to angel hosts. That strange book called Revelation, not one of the latest in the New Testament, indicates otherwise in its mysterious allusions to Armageddon—a word often on the lips of journalists and public speakers to describe the present European conflict—and to a final and terrific trial of strength between the embattled forces of evil and those of good on the stage of human affairs. It is not all allegorical; it is a world war that is spoken of.

Moreover, our Lord's own very emphatic words about non-resistance are plainly addressed to the individual and are concerned with the avenging of personal affronts. He never told us to turn any one else's cheek to the smiter, which is just the point; and He never said a single word about refusing to obey the call of the State to defend one's home and kindred by force of arms. That the Church never understood Him to mean that is plain from her practice in the early centuries. There were plenty of Christian soldiers in the imperial armies; being a

Christian did not disqualify a man for undertaking such a service. On the abstract principle there is no room for doubt; Christianity has always recognised that the executive of the State "beareth not the sword in vain." It is not so easy to say where the limitations of that authority come in; in the last resort that is a matter for the individual conscience to settle; it might be a Christian duty to refuse to shed blood in a bad cause at the bidding of the State or any other authority. In the early days to which I have already alluded there were martyrs who died rather than fight just as there were martyrs who died rather than render divine honours to Cæsar. I am only pointing out, and it is well worth emphasising, that from the very first the Christian Church as a whole did admit that under certain eventualities undefined the State had the right to make war and therefore the right to require its subjects to serve in its armies. The Christian ideal was universal peace; but in such a very unideal world as ours it had to be acknowledged that on the way to universal peace it might be sometimes the duty of a Christian to draw the sword.

I am not insisting that war itself is a good. It is not a good; pain in itself never is; war may be a necessary purgation of the body politic, a bracing up of the energies of the soul; but it is a grim remedy even at the best. It is no more a good than a surgical operation is a good; it may be necessary to get rid of a disease, but it would be better not to have the disease to begin with. *We have to distinguish between what is ideally and what is practically right.*

The Christian ideal of marriage, for example, is the union of one man and one woman for life on the basis of pure mutual affection and loyalty, but in practice we have to recognise that it is not always attainable with human nature as it is, and we legislate accordingly. The Christian ideal, again, is that of the angel song at the birth of the world's Redeemer, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men"; but while tyranny, oppression, and cruelty remain there must be war.

But, further, I utterly and entirely dissent from the view that there is something essentially uplifting in war as war. The late Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, says: That which invests war, in spite of all the evils that attend it, with a certain moral grandeur, is the heroic self-sacrifice it elicits. With perhaps the single exception of the Church, it is the sphere in which mercenary motives have least sway, in which performance is least weighed and measured by strict obligation, in which a disinterested enthusiasm has most scope. A battlefield is the scene of deeds of self-sacrifice so transcendent, and at the same time so dramatic, that, in spite of all its horrors and crimes, it awakens the most passionate moral enthusiasm." Is there no other way of arousing this moral enthusiasm, no other way of evoking to the same degree the spirit of self-sacrifice? Yes, if civilisation as a whole could rise to the moral level requisite for it. The late Professor William James of Harvard used to maintain that one great thing which modern civilisation had yet to do was to find a moral substitute for war, an incentive to action

that would bring out the grandest qualities of human nature without the accompaniment of slaughter and the suffering and anguish that follow in its train. Oh that we were sufficiently great of soul to do it, and to do it as one man! Every normal human being must dread, loathe, and detest war, for if it reveals some things that savour of heaven it reveals more that reek of hell. See what the glorification of war has done for Germany. I have not the slightest hesitation in admitting that as a people the Germans are intellectually better trained and more efficient than we, their resources better organised and developed, their manhood better disciplined and equipped for the business of life in its material aspects. But look at the temper of mind that goes with it—hard, arrogant, domineering, unable to appreciate the rights of others or even to understand others' point of view. It has given Germany the most unscrupulous government of modern times; for as sure as you get a nation mastered by the monster of militarism, a nation in which everything else in administration is subordinated to militaristic ideals, you get a Government without sentiment, without humanity, without respect for the ordinary obligations of truth and honour. Two ideals of the State confront each other on the battlefield to-day; for the sake of the future welfare of mankind which were it better should prevail? I think we could fairly appeal to civilisation on that issue alone without fear of the verdict. *Is the State a moral entity or is it not?* Our enemies hold that whatever the State chooses to do it may do if it thinks it to be for its advantage, that considerations

of right and wrong have no meaning as applied to the State; no question of conscience must deter the individual from carrying out its behests. A more cynical doctrine the world has never heard. If Germany were to win this war that doctrine would be triumphant; it is for us to determine that it shall not be. We war not for revenge nor for our own aggrandisement; we war to set mankind free from a bondage under which it has groaned for generations, Germany even more than ourselves. We are fighting the battle of the German people as well as our own, paradoxical though it seem to say so. We are fighting the battle of America as well as of Europe, and America knows it. We are fighting for democratic institutions, for international justice, for the right of the weak to live in safety alongside of the strong. International Law has broken down; we have got to rebuild it. Political and social idealism has been swept under by this flood of cultured barbarism from Berlin; we have got to restore it to its proper place. We are warring to end war if we can. The world has an object lesson before it to-day as to what militarism leads to. Heaven grant that the outcome of the present awful collision of spiritual and material forces may be the end of militarism and, as our Prime Minister said a year ago, the creation of a pact of the nations to prevent it from ever lifting its head again, not in Germany only, but anywhere else throughout the world.

CHAPTER IX

IF I WERE GOD

"Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde:
Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God;
As I wad do were I Lord God,
And ye were Martin Elginbrodde."[21]

THIS striking epitaph, quoted by George Macdonald, is said, though I cannot be sure, to have been placed on the tombstone of some individual of Norse extraction buried in the north of Scotland. The Norse element in certain parts of Scotland has contributed not a little to the characteristic sturdiness and independence of her people and to the great part they have played in the world in modern times. I hope it is true that this inscription does appear, or once did appear, in a Scottish graveyard. To my mind there is something rather fine about it, without a trace of irreverence or presumption. Something similar is recorded as having been uttered in France in the fifteenth century or thereabouts by a famous captain of freebooters named La Hire, though not with the simple dignity of the verse given above. According to Hallam, this worthy was not addicted to spending much time over his devotions and was found fault with thereupon.

He held, however, that his mode of praying was as effective as any one else's. Before going into battle he would address Heaven thus: "So do with me this day, God, as I would do with thee if I were God and thou wert La Hire." This bold, even audacious, anthropomorphism, this drawing of a likeness between man and God, makes one great assumption—namely, that divine goodness is at least equal to human and not different in kind. The crudity of the sentiment in other ways need not blind us to the value of this. That it puts man and God over against each other, as it were, as distinct entities, regarding God as a kind of larger man, but stronger, abler, and in possession of fuller information, holding a supreme magisterial office to which we are amenable, need not disturb us. Perhaps no religious proposition that has ever been framed has altogether escaped this inherent anthropomorphism or could do so. Do what we will, when we think of God, or, rather, when we think of the character of God (if I may be permitted the use of that not very satisfactory expression), we are more or less compelled to compare Him with man. We do it as a matter of course, even when we are not conscious of it. And we have high authority for doing it; in fact, the highest authority that has ever found expression through human lips, that of Christ himself. When He said, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" He was saying much the same as La Hire and Martin Elginbrod, after all. He was bidding us estimate the

goodness of God by the best we have learned to know of the goodness of man.

And yet we ought to be careful in our employment of this comparison. Obviously we cannot press it so far as to make it explain all the ways of God in His dealings with His creatures. God is not a larger man, viewing life from man's restricted standpoint and subject to the same limitations of feeling and action. He is the life of all that is, the infinitely complex reality that is finding manifestation in the world of worlds, present in every grain of dust as in the farthest star. Without Him nothing exists; in Him is all that is or ever shall be. To quote the words of one of the greatest of the world's spiritual seers, words that everybody knows without stopping to ponder them, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." How can we then enclose Him in human categories when we want to discuss His attributes? At least we must keep our thoughts clear while we attempt it. Of no man can it be said that others live, and move, and have their being in his; no man indwells any other being than his own except in a very limited and special sense; no man is the creator and sustainer of any universe, however small. As a matter of fact, no man ever creates anything, he only discovers. He works with nature and nature reveals her secrets to him. It is impossible for the human mind to imagine anything that does not already exist in some form. Picture as grotesque an animal as you please, you will still have to give it limbs, mouth, teeth, and eyes, or some of them; you may multiply the quantity but you cannot invent an organ for it

the like of which has never been seen or heard of before. The telephone and the wireless telegraph were hidden in earth and air when Abraham marched to the rescue of Lot across the plains of Mesopotamia millenniums ago, but he did not know it and so could not advise his kinsman of his coming in the way a British force on the same spot is doing to-day. Moses crossing the Red Sea used no aeroplane to reconnoitre Pharaoh's host, nor had he ever heard of the submarine, but they were there all right if he had only known how to summon them forth. No, man is not as God in relation to existence as a whole or in part. We have to reason from the known to the unknown: God does not. Our reason works within certain definite, sharply defined conditions: it cannot be supposed that God's does. As Henri Bergson tells us, the human mind is a by no means perfect instrument for enabling us to find our way about and do the best we can in a three-dimensional world, a world of up and down and to and fro, a world of material objects, of weight and gravitation, and dinners and teas, and clothes and houses, and cold and hot, and wet and dry, and all such like. Suppose a world of fifty dimensions—as there very well may be—or a world where none of these conditions held good at all, what then? But still it would be God's world, and His knowledge and power would pervade and control it as now. Clearly, when we talk of any likeness between man and God we must make large allowances.

Let me point out that I am taking nothing for granted so far. I am not on my own *ipse dixit* dogmati-

cally declaring that there is a God. I only say that if there be—and it is really undeniable in the last resort—He cannot be conditioned as we are, and therefore His ways of behaving must be to a large extent incomprehensible to us. Even the terms "He," "His," Him" as applied to deity are apt to become somewhat misleading. They at once call up the idea of a person of the male sex, like ourselves but greater, wiser, better perhaps. Let us get that out of our heads. God is neither male nor female, and none of the other human qualities that depend upon earthly relationships can be exactly predicated of Him. If I had a better pronoun wherewith to designate the divine being I would use it, but it is part of our limitations that we have none. We cannot call Him "It," for that suggests something less than human, not something more; and God must be more, infinitely more, than the greatest we have yet known as man; for surely we have nothing that has not come from Him; how could we have? I think I could get on common ground with the most pronounced agnostic, as well as the most assiduous churchgoer, by insisting on what I have said already: God is that, whatever it is, and it is far beyond the power of our intelligence and imagination to grasp, whence all that is proceeds directly or indirectly, except where our own wills come into play. He is the eternal force that brings into existence and maintains the universe and everything in it. Hence He must be the source of everything in ourselves which we are accustomed to look upon as admirable—good, beautiful, sublime. Can we get away from

that? I do not see how. In so far, then, as we find anything fine and worthy of reverence in human nature we are justified in affirming that that same thing is in God.

These considerations are suggested to me by remarks that have reached me concerning what I have previously written in these pages. They have not all reached me by post; some of them, and these not the least piquant, have been addressed to me orally by our soldiers who have been reading the trench edition of the *Sunday Herald*. But all the interrogations put together only amount to this: If God is good as man is good, or as man thinks of good, why does He permit evils to fall upon us from which we should do our best to shield our children? If I were God would I do it? "There cannot be a God," cried a French essayist, "for if there were the woes of humanity would break his heart." Are you sure of that? What if God knows, as we cannot know, that the woes of humanity are but as the troubles of childhood? The troubles of childhood are real enough to children, but what do their elders think of them? It is all a matter of perspective. I can remember, as I daresay everybody can, that the griefs and fears of my childhood's days were as intense and poignant in their way as anything I have endured since, but they would not seem very serious to me now; they did not seem very serious to my preceptors then, though no doubt I had their kindly sympathy in bearing them. They knew, as I could not know, that it was not so very important to save me from them but highly important that I should

come through them rightly. My playmates would have saved me from them, perhaps, or those who cared most for me would; but as a rule they could not. They took my point of view and mourned their impotence. To them it really did matter a great deal that I had lost my biggest glass alley or seen my favourite puppy drown or been forbidden to go to the school treat or been bowled for a duck in the cricket match. They knew all about the quarrellings and makings-up again which constituted school politics, the smart of injustice at the hands of ruthless grown-ups, the humiliation and dismay of being plucked in exams or given the cold shoulder by those whose favour one most ardently desired to win. But that was because they took my point of view; no adult either could or would, or if through sheer kindliness of heart one here and there pretended to they did it in such a way as to show me that they did not regard it in the same tragic light as I did.

Is not this the clue to the matter that puzzles so many people just now? Would we treat our children thus? we cry, when tragedy dark and dreadful invades our little world. No, we should not, any more than one child would ordinarily condemn another to the experiences that to the childish mind are irksome and grievous. If I were God, would I allow mankind either to inflict or endure anguish as it is doing to-day on such a colossal scale? If I were God, would there be all this cruel welter of blood and tears? With the immortal Omar we protest—

" Ah, Love, could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire;
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire? "

If I were God, would human folly and wickedness be permitted to fill the earth with horror and flame, to breed misery and injustice, to crush and trample upon the weak and innocent? Yes, *if you were God.* That is just the point: You are not God. If you were you would view the struggle and the pain " with larger other eyes," as Tennyson affirms that even the angels do or our sainted dead. You are not God, nor are you yet of the great cloud of witnesses who compass us about from the side of heaven; you are only a child at school, and with the eyes of a child you gaze upon this death in life, beholding not what lies beyond, and perceiving little of the reason why things are as they are in the sombre arena where

" Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn."

Let no one ask this question any more; it is a childish question though it springs from a good impulse. All that is good in us is of God; it must be; where else could it come from? You cannot get more out of the universe than is already in it somewhere. Is the stream of human tenderness likely to be purer than its fountain? That is the way some people talk, but it is pathetically silly; the very heart with which you protest against the ills of life is

the product of the source of life. To the riddle of existence

> "I have no answer for myself or thee,
> Save that I learned beside my mother's knee:
> All is of God that is and is to be,
> And God is good. Let this suffice us still,
> Resting in childlike trust upon His will
> Who moves to His great ends unthwarted by the ill."

There is comfort in this and inspiration too. But, some one will object, if the good is of God so is the bad; we have no more right to say He is good because there is goodness in the world than that He is bad because there is badness in the world. No? Is that the way you reckon with your friends? You do not expect the same man to be true and a liar, tender and brutal, faithful and treacherous. If your best friend is accused of dishonourable conduct, no matter how black the evidence may be, you refuse to credit it. You say, I know him to be of strict integrity; therefore I wait in confidence for the matter to be cleared up. Quite right: God cannot be the gentle heroism of Edith Cavell and the vile devilry of Von Bissing. That the one derives from Him renders it impossible that He could be the other. He could not be both Christ and Pilate.

The other night a soldier thus addressed me publicly: "Sir, somebody has been saying in England that a man who dies for his country goes straight to heaven whatever his life may have been beforehand. Do you think it is true that if a chap has been a bit rackety, and yet gives his life in this way, he will be all right on the other side, or will he have to go to

hell?" Do not smile, reader, at the naïve simplicity of the question; I thought I detected a certain wistfulness behind it, and it had evidently been widely discussed among the men who heard it put. I replied, "Probably the issue is not quite so sharp as you make it; few of us are fit either for highest heaven or deepest hell. But what would you do if you were God?" "I think I should give a fellow a chance," was the instant response. Need more be said?

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCHES AND UNIVERSAL PEACE. A GENERAL COUNCIL.

NOT long after the war commenced I made a suggestion from the City Temple pulpit which was widely, though for the most part inaccurately, quoted by the Press of this and other countries. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that the quotations were not so much inaccurate as inadequate because without their context, and also because of mistaken deductions from them. Merely to take a few sentences out of a lengthy discourse and print them as summing up a whole argument is seldom satisfactory. Certainly it was not so in this instance. The paragraph as a whole was somewhat as follows—

Would it not be possible for the Christian forces of the world to combine after the conclusion of peace for the one purpose of preventing a recurrence of this horrible strife? If we could not unite upon anything else, surely we might unite upon this one practical object. I would even suggest that the Pope, as the head of the largest Christian communion, should be induced to take the initiative in the matter and call Protestants to his counsels in connection therewith. At any rate such action should be taken

in concert with all the Christian churches of the world, however designated. Protestanism generally would support it, would be morally bound to do so. And no one but the Pope could do it effectively, for the reason just given—namely, that he is the head of the largest and most international organisation of those who profess and call themselves Christians. The Metropolitan of the great Eastern Church—or, rather, of that great branch out of the four or five belonging to it in which the people of Russia are included—could not do it. The Archbishop of Canterbury for obvious reasons could not do it; he is the spiritual head of Anglicanism only, and Rome would not respond to an invitation issued from that quarter. What is wanted is something analogous to a General Council of the whole undivided Church of Christ—not a General Council in the ordinary sense, of course, because not directly concerned with questions of faith and morals—but it would be a wonderfully impressive gathering all the same, and no doubt lead to even greater things—the ultimate re-union of Christendom, for instance. The Pope is the proper person to summon such an assembly. And there is a precedent for it in the Council of Trent, to which Protestant delegates were invited but refused to come. Had their response been favourable instead of unfavourable, who knows what strife and anguish Europe might have been saved in the last three hundred years?

These were not the actual words I used; I cannot recall them now; but they represent the gist of them.

One reason why I refer to them again is that I find they are still being quoted. They are coming back to me, or comments upon them are, from the ends of the earth, both by letter and the printed page. And they are generally misunderstood, not only by those who disapprove of them but by those who hail them with satisfaction. The *Glasgow Herald*, for example, one of the most influential newspapers in Great Britain, construed them as an appeal to the Pope to stop the war, made them the text of an indictment of peace-mongers in general, and went on gravely to warn the public against all the misguided individuals who advocated the laying down of arms before German militarism had been smashed. Such talk, the leader-writer declared, was not only futile but mischievous, as it only served to encourage the enemy by leading him to believe that certain elements in this country were in favour of peace at any price. I quite agree with him, only he was lecturing the wrong man. On the other hand, to my utter surprise, eminent leaders of thought in the churches and elsewhere gave warm support to the suggestion, or what they imagined to be the suggestion. I should have thought they would have scouted it as too friendly to the Scarlet Woman. But they did not. Anti-papal prejudice scarcely appeared at all in their utterances, being overshadowed by the purely humanitarian aspect of the case. "If the Pope or anybody else can put an end to all this bloodshed and misery," said one Free Church leader, "for God's sake let him have a try."

But I never said he could; nor did I say a word

about laying down our arms before Germany was beaten. I was not speaking of putting a stop to the present war but of what ought to follow when it did stop. Most people agree that we should be wise to think about that, though it is doubtful if we shall to any good effect; the conclusion of peace may find us unprepared for the future as usual. I know that it is quite useless to desire any mediation with Germany until she knows her power is broken. Nobody needs to tell us that. If I had had any idea beforehand that words spoken from a pulpit in the course of an ordinary sermon were likely to be taken up in the Press I should have been more careful to define my meaning. The meaning was clear enough to those who heard them in the first place.

The moment is not unsuitable for returning to the idea and pressing it. The chief thing against it is that in the interval indignation has mounted amongst the allies at the Pope's silence regarding the fate of Belgium. But that should not be allowed to affect the main issue, which is whether organised Christianity is strong enough to make its mind felt and have its decrees enforced in regard to the most crying moral need of the age. The Hague tribunal is very largely a failure, a sad disillusionment for advocates of international amity, and we need something better and ought to get it if we can. It is not as complete a failure as it looks, perhaps; it has done a great deal more than is popularly realised; but the way in which its solemn agreements have been summarily swept aside by the various combatants in this frightful struggle is a demonstration of its helplessness to

control the jealousies and antagonisms of nations. Germany cynically disregarded its requirements from the first, and more or less the belligerents opposed to her had to follow suit. Poison gas, for instance, was no afterthought; it was a deliberate policy secretly prepared for long before the war. In order to take her neighbours at a disadvantage Germany gave her plighted word along with them not to resort to this fiendish device, and forthwith set to work to experiment with one gas after another in view of the conflict she meant to provoke as soon as it suited her. This is all in keeping with her customary methods. She had no objection to signing as many Hague regulations as we pleased, but she had no intention of keeping them; they did not bind her for five minutes; it is not now only that she has broken them, but all along, ever since the ink was wet on the paper which bore her solemn pledge.

This is a revelation, and one wonders why an international tribunal could thus easily be set at nought, treated with contempt, in fact. In Germany's hands it has simply been a means of throwing dust in the eyes of possible enemies. Is it not because the Hague Court is without true moral authority? It should not be forgotten that we owe its establishment to the Czar, and that without doubt it was an honest and sincere attempt on his part to get rid of the spectre of militarism and the ever-accelerating competition in armaments with its inevitable outcome, to prevent the very thing that has now happened and plunged the whole world in woe. We all remember the joy with which the effort was universally

hailed and how much was expected from it—Germany, as usual, being the only dark horse, or rather the only power unwilling to co-operate wholeheartedly in the endeavour to secure universal peace. That, of course, was because she did not intend to have peace, she intended to have war. And yet it was the Czar who went to war first. The Russo-Japanese disagreement came to a head almost as soon as the Hague Conference began its sittings. It was a sad commentary on the hopes of its promoters. The Czar's motives were all right, but a purely legal tribunal, established by bargaining on utilitarian grounds, and fortified by no common faith in God and righteousness, was not likely to succeed. We must go further and higher for the cure of our ills.

Not many people realise, I think, that Europe was once a unity—civilisation was a unity—in a way it is not now. We have lost something very valuable in the last few hundred years that we urgently need to regain in this respect. I mean the unity which centred in the Catholic Church. At a time when all Europe was a congeries of ill-organised, constantly quarrelling States—though not one whit worse than now, when internal organisation has developed only at the cost of making warfare in general more deadly and terrible—there was one visible seat of moral authority to which all men looked, one mighty throne before which all secular potentates bowed down, and that was the See of St. Peter. It has been called the most magnificent failure in history, and with justice, this attempt to impose the law of God by word of mouth only upon all the ends of the earth.

It was wonderful beyond words. Europe was one in virtue of that authority and that alone, felt and knew itself to be one as it has never done since and never will till we recover something like it. Would that it had never been abused! It failed because it deserved to fail; it failed when it became itself only one political power among many and forfeited its prerogative of lofty disinterestedness. Let us get that unity back, and along similar but safer lines. I am not advocating a return to appeals to the Pope, and all that sort of thing; not suggesting a resumption of his jurisdiction over the internal affairs of this country or any other country; not asking that he as an individual or the holder of an exalted office should do anything whatever on his *ipse dixit* alone. What I am pressing for is a unity of action on the part of the Christian Churches through him which will result in something like a restoration on better terms of the international unity of nearly a thousand years ago.

Back to what we began with—Is it impossible to hope for a high-souled concentration of the energies of Christendom upon the design of putting an end to warfare between civilised states? When the present devastating struggle is over shall we not all be in the mood to listen to some such proposal? Mr. Asquith almost said as much in his Guildhall speech in the autumn of 1914. He held out the prospect of a solemn agreement of the nations to forbid the drawing of the sword again between any of their number coming within the pale of International Law. If serious and responsible statesmanship could say as

much as this at the outset of the most appalling war that has ever been waged, what about the Christian ideal of universal peace? Is it only a dream, after all; a far distant glimmer of hope for the race? I have given to the Premier's words what I take to be a legitimate extension of their immediate scope. A pact of the nations! How is it to be brought about? Broadly speaking, the nations coming within the pale of International Law are the so-called Christian nations. Japan was not included until a few years back. Cannot we utilise the tremendous force involved in the Christian sentiment of these nations to put a stop for ever to the use of brute force, so wasteful, wanton and wicked, in the settlement of international disputes and the prosecution of international rivalries? To be sure we can if we want to. And the Pope is the most fitting personage to take the lead in virtue of the peculiar position he holds in the western world. When I referred to the precedent of the Council of Trent I was not taking too much for granted. The separation between Protestantism and Catholicism had not become absolute by the middle of the sixteenth century. Protestantism up to then had been simply what the name implies, a protest against certain things within the Catholic system; it was not at first intended as a complete break-off from that system. Right on into the next century reconciliation was sought and aimed at. It was a fierce age too. When safe-conducts were offered to the Protestant delegates in order that they might attend the Council they were certainly justified in fearing a breach of faith with

imprisonment and death as their portion if they were unwary enough to place themselves in the power of their ecclesiastical adversaries. Anyhow, they did not go. But my point is that they were invited, and invited to the most important General Council of the Church since primitive times. Why not invite them again, not to a General Council, but to something even more comprehensive, convoked on a specific issue? Could the Pope be got to do it as soon as the war is over? No one could charge him with pro-Germanism then, and it would not matter a button if they did. His personal opinions would not be in question. What the assembly would be expected to do would be to place on record its abhorrence of war between Christian powers and to pledge itself to bring all reasonable pressure to bear upon civilised governments and peoples to render a world conflict like the present impossible for all time to come. We should have had our lesson by then and be more than disposed to listen to the appeal. There is not a Church in Christendom that would not join in it through its appointed representatives. And the vast conference thus convened would not end in smoke. As the outcome of it there might be a tribunal established more authoritative and effective than that of the Hague, to say no more. Perhaps we should get even further than that in, shall we say, the direction of adjusting our religious differences too, and unifying civilisation once more on that basis.

Why not? The like has been done before—not so thoroughly, perhaps, but to a large extent. We

owe the mitigation of the horrors of modern warfare to it. It was Church Councils in the tenth century that forbade the spoliation and maltreatment of non-combatants; and who has not heard of the Truce of God throughout the Middle Ages whereby hostilities were limited to what was practically about three months in the year; there was to be no fighting from Wednesday evening to Monday morning in any one week, and there were special seasons, such as Lent, when there was to be none at all. Think of that to-day! We have lost in some ways if we have gained in others by our boasted material advance in the past few generations.

When I was in Rome, in the early spring of 1914, I discussed the above subject with a highly placed dignitary of the Papal court and found him not unsympathetic but more than doubtful of success until a big war had taken place. He might have foreseen what was coming, so truly did he describe the terrible situation in which we find ourselves at this moment. "Governments would not listen to any such representation," he said, "even if backed by the suffrages of all the Christian societies on earth, until the arbitrament of brute force has been tried once more. They have not been piling up armaments all these years for nothing, and the explosion must soon come. Moreover," he added, "this is the outcome of the false ideals by which the nations have been living. Politics are non-moral; conscience is left out of them. The very men who in their private lives are amiable and exemplary will, the moment they enter the office from which they exercise their

functions as statesmen, divest themselves of all scruples and behave without consideration for anything but the material interests of the particular country they happen to serve. It is all very sordid and very grievous; and there is a period of great tribulation ahead of us. After that, perhaps something may be done on the lines you suggest. The Holy Father would take the first opportunity he could find if he saw any good likely to come of it."

I was sorry to hear his final word. "There could be no committee," he declared. "If the Pope acted at all he would act as head of the Catholic Church and that only; but there is no reason why what he was about to do should not be made known unofficially to the chief authorities of the various historic Protestant sects and let them be in readiness to support it. Action would then be simultaneous when it came, and do all you want."

No, it would not. We want something better than that. We want the deliberate and sustained co-operation of all who count themselves followers of the Prince of Peace. Shall we ever get it?

CHAPTER XI

THE ILLUSION OF PROGRESS

PYTHAGORAS said, "There is no being but becoming." The statement is a paradox, but ordinary experience goes far towards justifying it. One does not need to be a metaphysician in order to realise that life is ever in progress of development. We are ever looking forward, ever seeking a goal; the zest of life is in anticipation.

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

No sooner have we arrived at any point at which our endeavours have aimed than we instantly look beyond it and find a new focus for desire. Somehow we cannot stand still, cannot be content, cannot rest in present attainment. We may say we do, but we don't. There is no person so passive and listless in relation to his environment that he does not try in some degree to improve it if only to shift from one side of the fire to the other; he is never completely satisfied for long. If he loses interest in the future, or despairs of it, he is already in the way of death. With the ordinary healthy-minded member of society to live is to hope, dream, plan and execute. One always has something to do which one believes will

tend towards betterment, some object to be gained, some end to be achieved; and as long as that goes on one is truly alive—this *is* living. Is there any reader among those to whom these words come who is not at least trying to secure something for himself or other people which he thinks will be an advantage? Not one, I should think. We are all trying, trying in little ways and big ways, to make conditions better than we found them or they found us, to make to-morrow better than yesterday.

And there is more than a touch of illusion about it too. You scheme and toil for years in the expectation that once a certain success has been won you will thenceforth be able to take things more easily or sail your barque in calmer waters or be freed from the necessity of such energising again. If I could only turn that corner, you say, or obtain this situation, or have done with the restrictions that have hampered me so long, I should be all right. Does it ever turn out so? Not in the sense you pictured it, I warrant. You simply go straight on. There is another corner to be turned just ahead, another position to strive after, a fresh set of hindrances to be battled with and overcome. I do not say there is no gain accruing from the struggle: I only say that the very same effort has to be made, the very same strain undergone, but with a new objective.

Furthermore, we are all intent upon making something. Man loves to create; it is instinctive with him. Put him down on a desert island and he will instantly set to work to bring into existence some object of beauty or utility which was not there

before. I admit that he does not really create; he only combines and adjusts in terms of nature's laws; but he has the creative idea, and gives expression to it as nature affords him opportunity and supplies material. And in this he finds his happiness. It is a joy to build and increase, to subdue natural forces to rational ends; there is no joy to equal it except that of loving and being loved, and even that has a good deal of the other in it; the two are intertwined. Always we are reaching out towards betterment, striving to produce it, and the main impulse so to do is a social one.

Moreover, the best kind of work, the one that gives the fullest satisfaction to the worker, is always impersonal in motive. You have only to interrogate your own experience to find that this is so. If you succeed in inventing a machine that no other mind has ever thought of your principal delight consists in the fact that it is of universal utility; it belongs to the race, not to yourself alone. You would have no pleasure in it whatever if you knew for certain that nobody would profit by it but yourself. You may be keen and eager for fame and wealth on account of it, but nothing is more certain in this world than that you would lose all interest in your own achievement the moment it proved to be worthless to mankind. At the back of everything worth doing, no matter what, is this feeling that the whole race benefits by it, and not the individual only—not the doer only, anyhow. You may be selfish and grasping to an extreme degree, calculating, commercial, but you cannot get any good for yourself out of your

creations unless you can feel assured that they belong more to the community than they do to you, more to posterity than to the present, are helping to enrich the common life, adding somewhat to the constantly mounting total of humanity's gains. You may not keep much consciousness of this in what you are doing; you may be so completely absorbed in your task as a task as to be oblivious of its bearing on the future; but the fact is there all the same at the back of all your striving, and gives it meaning and value. Has any artist ever yet painted a masterpiece that was not for other eyes than his own? Did he want it to perish along with himself? In a sense the whole race produced that picture as an expression of its soul, and for the whole race it lives. What poet ever sung save to and for his kind at large? True, he could not help himself. As Tennyson avowed—

> "I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing."

Nevertheless every soul that breathes is present impersonally in every song that gushes from a poet's heart.

All our activities operate between two poles: self-ism and other-ism. Perhaps the two are not ultimately inconsistent. You cannot realise yourself without serving the whole. Stark egoism, if it could exist anywhere, which I doubt, would destroy itself. In self-giving is self-gaining. And what a curious thing it is that the impulse to self-giving should be so mighty, notwithstanding all the objections of

prudent self-interest. I verily believe those psychologists are right who maintain that the strongest instinct of human nature, after all, is that of self-immolation, the peculiar exalted joy that comes of flinging all one is and has into the common stook when some tremendous demand is made upon our uttermost in an hour of crisis. I question whether there is a single man in the whole range of my acquaintance or anybody else's who would remain absolutely unmoved by an appeal to that in him, whatever it is, that makes the individual willing to die that others may live or some great cause prevail. I have never come across one and never expect to. Base men I have met, not a few, and suffered from them—mean men, cowardly men, men with shrivelled, sordid souls; but I am as certain as I live that these same men, placed in circumstances of dire need, such as the siege of a great city or the sinking of a ship at sea, with all that such a tragedy would mean for the weak and helpless, and appealed to at the right moment—for that is important—or fired by noble example, would rise to the full height of their manhood and behave like heroes. They may not live like heroes, but that is another matter. There is something deep down in every one of us that compels us, once it can be awakened, to count not our lives dear unto us, in fact to find an austere joy in walking straight into the arms of death if an occasion arises big enough to demand the sacrifice. Men have done this for generations unborn, are doing it to-day. The lonely lot of the pioneer has often been cheered

by that realisation when no other comfort was left. Thus brooded Theodore Parker—

> "I see before
> My race an age or so; and I am sent
> For the stern work, to hew a path among
> The thorns—I take them in my flesh—to tread
> With naked feet, the road, and smooth it o'er
> With blood. Well, I shall lay my bones
> In some sharp crevice of the broken way.
> Men shall in better times stand where I fell,
> And journey singing on in perfect bands,
> Where I have trod alone."

This thought of ministering to human progress by what one does and suffers in the present has in it an element of the sublime. We recognise in it an intrinsic greatness. But is it enough, taken by itself, to justify the cost it generally exacts? I am sure it is not. It either implies the eternal or it is the greatest of delusions. We of the modern world have been obsessed by the notion of progress as an incentive to action, and, as I have shown, there is a noble ingredient in the conception such as it is. But a progress which looks no farther than the perfecting of human society on this earth at some long distant date, supposing such a thing to be possible, which it is not, is an utterly inadequate ideal for man or nation. No civilisation worth fighting for will ever be made by it or ever has been. It is difficult to imagine the difference in this respect between ancient and modern thought. The ancients did not believe in progress at all, rather in reaction and decadence or a static condition of things waiting for

an inevitable end. The Greeks of the classic age are commonly supposed to have been a joyous folk, full of eager interest in the world as it is and valuing it for its own sake; to them mundane existence was ever full of smiling beauty. Was it? There is no sadder testimony to the contrary in all literature than is supplied by the Greek tragedies and Greek philosophy generally. The less said about their morality, perhaps, the better, but their religion had a note of hopelessness in it which was all too faithfully reflected in the maxims of their daily life. They dreaded to die because of the gloom of Hades, the abode of the dead, as they pictured it; but they never talked of living for any golden morrow as we do. As for the great oriental empires of the past, just as now, whenever the individual did become articulate therein his note was one of mournful resignation. No Jew ever looked forward to making the world gradually better; the best he could anticipate was that God would one day intervene suddenly to drive all the evil out of it with a strong hand. Christian civilisation was not greatly different for centuries. It brought glad tidings of great joy, but they had nothing to do with progress in the modern sense of the word. Christianity despaired of the world—never let us forget that. It expected little from it at the best, and much evil at the worst. It looked forward, not to the gradual emergence of a better ordered human society in which every one should be happy as a matter of course, but to a day when Christ should come again with power to put an end all at once and for ever to human disabilities,

or at least to those of the saints; it was to be otherwise with the sinners. All these people of old looked back, not forward, back to a better state of things which they imagined to have once existed and from which humanity had culpably and foolishly declined. They never dreamed of such a thing as going on, steadily advancing with the aid of science from one achievement to another, till all human ills had been conquered save death, and even he should be postponed. That is the way we talk—or did before the war. Perhaps we are wiser now. Mr. C. G. Coulton, in his interesting study, *From St. Francis to Dante*, states that one of the most striking features of thirteenth-century mentality was its pessimism. This is surprising; we are accustomed to think the exact opposite. We have thought of this as a violent but picturesque period, subject to extremes, naïve and childlike in its outlook on life, full of religious fervour and zeal, vigorous and unafraid. And here we are told that it was nothing of the sort! Mr. Coulton says it was always looking for the end, convinced that things were going from bad to worse, and that human wickedness and misery could not be divinely tolerated much longer.

What ground is there for believing that human affairs must inevitably progress towards betterment? None whatever. History almost demonstrates the contrary. There is nothing in our civilisation to guarantee its permanence more than any of its predecessors. It might completely collapse, as did the wonderful Graeco-Roman civilisation upon whose ruins ours arose. In fact, there are plenty of signs

of such a catastrophe already. We have not solved the problem of living in mutual dignity, harmony and peace; we have no clear object before us as individuals or states, unless it be that of the ceaseless accumulation of material good; we are only partially socialised as yet; and, finally, all governments are more or less mad. Progress on the whole there may be, but it is like that of the incoming tide on a level sandy beach. The waves may seem to be coming in fast, but they run back as well as forward, and progress is slow. A long arm of water will creep inland here and there far in advance of the rest and too shallow to carry fishing craft. It reaches a certain point, and then waits till reinforced from an entirely different side.

> "For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
> Seem here no painful inch to gain,
> Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
> Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

To talk of progress as sufficient in itself as a dynamic to human devotion and enterprise is like saying that it is worth setting a prairie on fire in order that possibly some people a thousand miles off in the direction the wind is blowing may be able to cook their evening meal. Is all the agony and bloody sweat of mankind since the beginning of time to have none other outcome than that? I repeat that, even supposing you could get a perfected form of human society on this earth in some remote age to come—which the very conditions of fleshly existence forbid—it would not be worth a single tear to-day.

The humblest private who lays down his life on the battlefield for us is worth more than that in himself alone. And he dies for more than that, even if to his own thought he only dies for England, the England that is to be. He dies for an immortal good, a good in which he, with all the race, past, present, and to come, will be included and fulfilled at "the consummation of all things."

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION AFTER THE WAR: WILL CHRISTIANITY SURVIVE?

ONE subject upon which a great deal is being said and written at the present time is the relation of the Christian Church to the war and the new conditions created by the war. On the one hand we are told that the war itself proves the failure of Christianity, and on the other that it has already led to something like a religious revival. Critics of the churches storm at them for having so little comfort or guidance to give in a time of such prodigious upheaval as this, and at the same time we are receiving overwhelming testimony to the devotion of the chaplains at the front and the amazing activities of religious organisations in general in providing for the spiritual needs of the troops; nothing of the kind has ever been attempted so thoroughly and systematically before; it is as much a new creation as our vast armies themselves. But what many people are asking is whether it will continue and in what form. How will religion come out of the struggle? Will Christendom repudiate its ancient faith or not? Will civilisation in the future, or what is left of it, want to have anything to do with Jesus Christ or the Church that professes to speak in His name? Here is a composite question

which we ought to be facing now and have some definite answer ready.

It may be as well to say, in the first place, that this is a challenge addressed not so much to us as to our Lord. This should not be forgotten in any searchings of heart or confession of our own shortcomings which we may undertake. Christians, and especially the clergy, may be greatly to blame for much that the critics complain of or they may not, but the fact remains that if the Church of Christ can perish from the earth, as some even among its own adherents are fearing, the result will be the failure less of Christians than of Christ. He promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and so far that promise has been kept, kept through periods much more menacing and deadly so far as the spiritual well-being of mankind was concerned than now. Would anybody affirm that the Europe ecclesiastically governed by the Renaissance popes, for instance, was in a better state than the present; or that religion in the western world in the dark and troublous tenth century, when human society seemed on the verge of collapsing altogether, gave hope of a better morrow than ours? Yet the Church recovered herself then, and why should we doubt her ability to do so still? There is absolutely no comparison in the moral status of the ministry to-day as viewed against that of either of these epochs, not to speak of the Georgian era in England alone, when it was only too easily possible for a drunken reprobate to hold half a dozen livings at once and the king make the cynical remark that half his bishops were atheists.

The Methodist revival, the Evangelical movement, and the Tractarian movement have all had their effect in raising the quality of those who follow the most sacred of all callings in our country, and different causes have operated in the same direction at intervals in other countries. With all their faults, and they have been many and grievous, this can honestly be said of the monastic orders, and the Friars and Jesuits each in their generation and degree; they all breathed new life into the dry bones of the regular ministry as they successively came on the scene. The Church has often failed locally but never universally. She has disappeared entirely from certain parts of the world where she had established a footing for a time, and she has had the conquest to make all over again as, most remarkably, in the case of China. The flame of spiritual fervour has again and again died down in Christendom as a whole, but has never gone out, and never will unless Christ Himself was wrong in His forecast of the future; and it is a great strength to any Christian worker to know that. After all, it does not principally rest with us and our merits to keep the flag of the faith flying; it rests with Him who gave us the commission to go and make disciples of all nations. By the "gates of hell" He must have meant the forces of evil in the world and perhaps in other worlds too. I take it that He was thinking of all that in seen or unseen is fighting against the Kingdom of heaven. So here is one thing to be reckoned with at the outset of any inquiry as to the position and prospects of Christianity in this or any other age: our Blessed Lord and Master

guaranteed that it should not fail. Let the discouraged and apprehensive lay hold on that. It can only be proved false when the human race rejects Jesus Christ, and that is not likely to happen. For, whatever may be said about His Church, it seems agreed to reverence Him.

At the same time it must be admitted that there have been tendencies at work for the past generation or two which the war has brought to a head and which were and are directly and consciously opposed to Christianity as a system of belief and practice—I do not mean in regard to this or that doctrine or mode of worship or explanation of the cosmic scheme, but as a moral ideal, a rule of life desirable for men to follow and by which society should be ordered and governed. In this respect the latter part of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth have witnessed a return to the sub-apostolic age. When Christianity first began to be a power in the world it found itself up against the ideals of an ancient and elaborate civilisation, seemingly impregnable and rooted in human nature. The Christians had a certain standard of conduct to proclaim and live which was treated with great scorn by the pagan philosophers and magistrates as being an ethic for women and slaves. The Stoic philosophy, whose finest but not most characteristic product was the noble Emperor Marcus Aurelius, was that which best interpreted the Roman genius, the genius of those marvellous soldiers who conquered the world. To tell a successful Roman general that he ought to love his enemies would have been tanta-

mount to telling him that the Roman empire ought not to exist, and he would have treated the proposition with the most utter contempt. We take for granted nowadays that the Christian law of love is the highest whether we obey it or not, but the Roman thinker of eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago would not have done anything of the kind; he would have maintained that this was not a proper ideal to set before the mind of youth. Two moralities thus strove against each other, and in the end the Christian prevailed, though everything seemed against it. Let me emphasise the point: it was not a contest between what everybody saw to be right and everybody knew to be wrong, but between two inconsistent views of right and wrong. The new Christian ethic did emphasise the more feminine qualities in human nature, the gentle, self-effacing, tender and considerate in opposition to the more characteristically masculine, egoistic, overbearing. It took a long time before the issue was made clear, and when the victory came—for it did come—it built a new civilisation. Men have never fully obeyed the Christian rule of life, but the enormous, the incalculable gain made to humanity was the universal admission ultimately secured that this was right, this was the true ideal to aim at, and that everything inconsistent with it was wrong. We are still far from having worked it out in our social relations, which are largely influenced by selfish and therefore anti-Christian considerations, but at least we profess our belief in it, and that is a tremendous change from the time when it had to overcome and drive out another and widely different idea as to

what was truly admirable and to be aimed at in character and conduct.

But, as I have just said, for a good while past potent attempts have been made to overthrow the Christian ethic and substitute another for it on the ground that it is effete. The avowed object of Nietzsche and others who thought with him on this, however much they might disagree with him in other things, was to destroy Christianity as a false morality—slave morality they called it. It is curious to note what a reversion to type this was. Nietzsche hated and despised Prussianism and yet was himself made by it, for there is not the slightest doubt that the Prussian spirit which has increasingly dominated the German people for the last forty years was partly created by and partly created the professors who have truculently preached it in the seminaries, and instilled it in season and out of season into the rising generation. History certainly does repeat itself in some ways, and this is one of them. The successful war of 1870 made the new-born German empire drunk with the lust of power. Its militaristic temper —brutal, ruthless, domineering—was a recrudescence of that of old Rome, the Rome of the invincible war machine and the pagan philosophies; the similarity is rather striking; the main difference is that in modern Germany patriotism in the exclusive sense has become a passion to which everything else must be subordinated, whereas Rome, at least, aimed at the idea of a world-citizenship. Otherwise we have just the same worship of power and might, the same lust of domination, the same ruthlessness in attaining ends;

and then, of course, in both cases we have the philosopher coming along to show that this hard, grim, bloody-minded monster that had its foot on the neck of the human race represented something stronger, greater, more desirable from the ethical point of view and every other point of view than what it was seeking to supersede. Morality, the professor assures us, as we have hitherto understood it is but a device of the weak to protect themselves against the strong; and he insists upon the necessity for a new morality, the morality of German Kultur and the mailèd fist, the morality of the terrible "blonde beast." We have seen it at work in the last eighteen months and know its fruits. Here is its genesis — a triumphal war, a consequent State policy consistently carried out, and then the elevation of the cult of nationalism and brute violence into a religion. True, the name Christian is retained for it, but it is not Christianity at all; it is Paganism revived. If Germany were to win this war Christianity would be trampled in the dust and anti-Christ enthroned. The slave-morality would have gone under, Nietzsche or no Nietzsche; his main contention would be justified.

Nevertheless we must admit that such a state of things could not have arisen without the co-operation of the rest of Christendom to some extent. We are all in it more or less. Ever since the marvellous and comparatively sudden forward leap of natural science in the nineteenth century, practically the whole civilised world has been feverishly busy exploiting our hitherto unknown material sources. There is no harm in that, to be sure, seen in its proper

proportion, but, unfortunately, that is what has been lacking. Alfred Russel Wallace says that from the material point of view civilisation made more progress in the latter half of the nineteenth century than in the two thousand years preceding. What more likely than that men should come to be so preoccupied with considerations of material good as to forget for a time that there was any other kind of good? People always tend to become like their pursuits, and the practical materialism of the past fifty or sixty years has gradually developed a type of man who is, to use E. A. Abbott's term, "indisposed" towards religion. He does not fight it, does not definitely reject it, he simply becomes indifferent to it; he has no use for it. This is not because he is cleverer than his forefathers, far otherwise; it is that he has developed another kind of mind, a mind that is taken up with the things of this world, that dwells mainly on the outside of life. It is not even that we have gone backwards in our moral standards nor that the vicious perversion of moral ideals which we have noted in the case of Germany has had very much vogue with us. Moral standards are always changing, or at least changing their stresses. The morality of one generation is not quite that of another; still less is the morality of one race that of another. It is a moot point, indeed, whether morality could not exist without religion. To have a human society at all we must have a morality of some sort; if every man were a law unto himself society would not hold together. And in commercial countries like our own the virtues emphasised will naturally be those which

tend to the increase and conservation of property, as being able to place reliance upon a man's word and the like. "Integrity" is a favourite excellence in the character of a successful industrial or commercial magnate. In other and less prosperous countries, such as the southern districts of Europe, this is seldom so marked, and stay-at-home British Philistines are apt to be shocked when they hear that the Spaniard or Neapolitan has less regard for the truth than they and is quite without "integrity." It does not occur to them, perhaps, that their own integrity and truthfulness are consistent with a good deal of moral blindness in the matter of social justice. Perhaps a future generation will ask with amazement how it ever came to be thought that the possession of vast wealth and luxurious habits of living were consistent with a profession of Christianity while slums and rags remained. It has been truly said that the laws of England attribute more importance to offences against property than to those against the person, while in the Romance countries it is almost the reverse. If we could get outside our world altogether and view it from some totally different environment we should see at once that we have long been so obsessed by materialistic conceptions as to have lost consciousness of the fact; we simply take for granted that the practical things of life are those which relate to material values, and the practical man the man of sound judgment upon material problems, whereas, surely, it should be just the other way round. The truly practical man is the man who has some idea as to what life is for, and who

knows that the pursuit of material objects as ends in themselves starves and enervates the soul.

This is the real secret of the falling away in regard to religion which has been noticeable throughout Europe and America for such a long time. We have been growing a wrong type of mind, a type whose tendency is to think and feel in terms of material good and that alone, and to assume almost without question that the only real kind of good is that which directly or indirectly pertains to the body and its needs. There is not a pin to choose between the rich and the poor in this respect; the one has what the other wants, and that is about all. And it is this invincible prepossession which has made the war. The war is a clash of spiritual ideals, it is true, but if Germany had not been convinced that it was a thing supremely desirable to despoil other nations of their material possessions she would not have armed to do it, and we on our part would not have armed to resist her. How far we are right or wrong to resist her I will not now discuss. Suffice it to say with Mr. Norman Angell that there is nothing now to be done but to smash Prussianism; let us do that first, and then perhaps we shall get a chance to rebuild civilisation on a safer plan. For what is happening now is the inevitable outcome of the ideals by which we have all been living. Holding, as we have done, that the more of this world's goods we could heap together the better, and that physical well-being was the first of all considerations, no wonder we fight to get and keep. Germany has but outdistanced the rest of us in this view of life and

its meaning. And by the law of the good God all this has recoiled on itself and is destroying itself, as it always must in the end. Matter is but the sacrament of spirit, the instrument of the soul's probation; if its spiritual use be lost sight of or degraded the result is chaos and suffering till we learn our lesson better. And with all its horrors the war has taught us that the ordinary man knows perfectly well when driven back upon it that there are things better worth living and dying for than can be measured and weighed in material symbols. The men who are fighting our battles to-day have got up to this level, and it is hardly to be supposed that they will entirely come down from it when the war is over. It is not Christianity that has failed, but ourselves, and we have got to get back to first principles and endeavour once more to understand and, what is much harder, to obey our Master's precepts concerning life and its potentialities.

It is to me inconceivable that mankind at large should ever cease from taking interest in the spiritual background of life; as well expect it to descend to the level of the beasts of the field. I use the word spiritual in a wide sense to denote all the higher aspects of life—our loves, fellowships, mutual affinities, social joys, lofty emotions, yearnings, aspirations, wonderments. Is there anything that so completely differentiates us from the brutes as the faculty of wonder? Man is the animal with the upward look. Think of what music means in the enlargement of our spiritual horizons, think of all the poetry and the painter's art, all the works of imagination that are

the common possession of the race, and then ask whether it is possible to divorce these for long from their true setting in the worship of the Creator. The possession of a spiritual nature implies religion, and religion we must have, not only as the sanction of all that we feel to be great, good, and beautiful in our total experience, but as the very soul thereof. It is often maintained that the artistic temperament can exist without religion, just as morals can and do; but the answer to that is that neither of them ever really does. The artistic temperament can wallow in sensuality, but it is bound to feel the thrill of transcendental mysteries or it would not be itself; beauty *is* the eternal thrusting through into the temporal, and always elusive; he who sees beauty sees God, though in a glass darkly. And there is a point beyond which all mere utilitarianism in morals gives way to a passion for the ideal which loses itself in the skies; ethics may begin in the necessity for framing rules to enable human beings to rub along together, but soon get beyond that and rise into a region where the individual conscience may have to defy the whole of society in the name of a higher than any merely human law; God stands revealed in the very thought of an ideal right towards which to aspire. As Browning has it in the "Guardian Angel"—

> "O World, as God has made it! All is beauty:
> And knowing this is love, and love is duty.
> What further may be sought for or declared?"

What men are learning on the battlefields of Europe of the glory of sacrifice and its mystical potencies is

drawing them back to God by way of the cross of Christ; our vulgar, blatant, worldly, commercial, pleasure-loving age is seeing meanings in that cross it never saw before, and getting rid of many delusions in the process. We are being saved as by fire. Let us recover the simplicities of life and we recover faith. We are re-learning the old, old lesson that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. We are realising almost with the surprise of a new discovery that not what we have but what we are is the secret of blessedness or wretchedness, that there is nothing to mourn over but the evil in our own hearts, and that death, however sad and dreadful its accompaniments, is but the prelude to vaster ventures of the soul and unimaginable joys. Nothing can be killed that is worthy to be kept alive or essential to our highest well-being here or hereafter.

If I had my time to come over again I should with even greater earnestness try to put first things first. The spiritual is not the social any more than it is the intellectual; these derive from it but are not itself, and if made a substitute for it can but issue in disillusionment. I should fight for social justice with all my might and main, for the abolition of caste privilege, grinding poverty, and the all-round uglification of life by greed and covetousness. But I should know that to try to make men good and happy by giving them a perfect environment would be hopeless taken by itself. Quicken the spiritual consciousness, the sense of God, and we shall solve the social problem too; I have no confidence in any

other solution. The best friends of the working man have seen that long ago; was it not Mr. Philip Snowden who said that we should never get the Socialised State till we had trained all classes to think and feel socially?—and what is that but to say that what we need is a Church-State, a State which realises itself the Body of Christ and its citizens members one of another? We are that already, but we don't know it, hence all our troubles. And if Germany, by preaching one idea persistently and thoroughly for forty years could create a general consciousness of national solidarity for predatory purposes, cannot servants of Christ everywhere begin to work with consecrated determination to create a general consciousness of spiritual solidarity which will destroy all the forces of harm and hate, and superimpose the Kingdom of God upon the ruins of the materialistic civilisation which is now perishing in smoke and flame? There is nothing the matter with the world but wickedness, and wickedness, as some of the Alexandrian Fathers would have said, is at bottom nothing but ignorance. If we only knew our true interest no man would ever dream of trying to exploit his neighbour.

So to those who fear for the future of the Christian religion I would say, Trouble not yourselves; it is not Christianity that has failed, but Christians. All talk about Christianity being on its trial and the like is sheer nonsense; it has never been on its trial; it is about time it was. Mr. Bernard Shaw once said from my pulpit that there had never been more than one real Christian and that the world crucified Him.

Some time after the war started he is reported to have said also in reply to a question as to what would be the best course to follow when peace returned, that he hoped the nations might be persuaded to try Christianity for a change. Individuals have tried Christianity with a certain amount of success: society never. Where, then, is the use of charging a rule of life with having proved inadequate to human needs when it has never had the chance of showing itself equal to them? And who can doubt that it is equal to them, and more than equal? The one certain cure for all our ills would be to get men to live, as John Stuart Mill said, so that Jesus Christ would approve their life. If that could be done little else would remain to be done, for we should have the disposition to get together and help to bear one another's burdens instead of adding to them, and that would soon solve all our problems. And the curious thing is that there is in every one of us something that can be appealed to along this line already. I think it would be no exaggeration to say that the two strongest tendencies in human nature are absolutely antithetical — namely, the tendency towards self-preservation and the tendency towards self-sacrifice. Call for either and you will usually get it according to the plane on which you issue your summons. The very same men who will do mean and selfish things in the ordinary way of business will spring to arms and fling their lives away in the hour of their country's need, as we are now seeing. This impulse to self-immolation in presence of a great impersonal ideal, of something we feel has

the right to demand our uttermost, is the very basic principle of the Christian gospel. Until it can be eradicated from the human heart there can be no question of dethroning Him whose very name is the synonym for self-sacrificing love and in whose pierced hand is the sceptre of omnipotence. May this sombre season in a blood-drenched world find us prostrate at His feet.

CHAPTER XIII

NOËL AT THE FRONT

How many people realise, I wonder, that there are two New Year's days in the calendar, one in January and one in December? But it is so. Christmas Day is really the beginning of a new year, or was originally intended to be such, so perhaps Scottish folk, with their characteristic consistency and economy of time and other things, have wisdom on their side in refusing to celebrate two, and therefore confine themselves to the first of January only. I don't know how it happens that we have the two within a week of each other, though I daresay one could soon find out. The history of the calendar is an interesting and intricate study. The beginning of the year has been fixed in nearly every month of the twelve by one nation or another, but why the civilised world has finally settled upon two separate dates for the event, one ecclesiastical and the other legal, I am not aware.

No one knows the day on which Christ was born. The great world paid no heed at the time; it was a lowly birth unaccompanied by earthly recognition and display; though doubtless there was stir enough about it in heaven, and, as is said to have been the case with other notable though far less important

nativities, certain portents and intimations were allowed to break through to this side for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. But when, generations later, the Church was making her way in the world and aiming to present her great mysteries to the various races who were coming under her sway, she in her turn, and very wisely, had to adapt and assimilate a good deal. She found a good many old-world customs and institutions she was willing to let stand, even when they bore a quasi-religious character. Thus the shrines of local pagan deities were often reconsecrated and associated with the name of some Christian saint. The people of the neighbourhood could still continue to worship there as they had always been accustomed to do; if miracles of healing had taken place on the spot, as some devoutly believed, there was no reason why they should not go on taking place even more liberally under Christian auspices. These transformations must have proceeded very extensively; there are traces of them even in our own country and still more in Ireland. Professor T. R. Glover says, in his *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, that there is plenty of evidence that in southern Italy and elsewhere many of the shrines of the Madonna are only those of Isis re-named. Be that as it may, there can be no question about the great Christian festivals; there are ancient cosmic anniversaries, relics of nature worship, taken over and spiritualised, given a new and higher meaning and value. Christmas starts the series; it represents the new birth of the sun after the winter solstice. We reach the

shortest day about the 20th of December, the days on which the hours of light are fewest and those of darkness are at their maximum. Then follow three or four days during which this proportion remains practically unchanged; but on the 25th the sun rises a little earlier than heretofore, and thereafter goes on rising earlier each day till midsummer is reached, the amount of light in the world increasing all the time, day by day, without intermission save at the next solstice. Were not our ecclesiastical fathers right in seeing in this a felicitous figure of the coming of Christ into the world? What better day could have been chosen on which to celebrate the birth of Him who is to all ages the Light of the World than what we now know as Christmas Day? For, although only heaven knew it at the time, there did come a new inpouring of divine light into the dark places of the earth on the particular day, whenever it was, that Mary's child first lay within her arms; something broke through from the transcendental world into human life that had never been here before, and from that day to this the light has grown and broadened, with here and there a solstice or a temporarily darkened sky, and will go on increasing till we reach the perfect day. The first Christmas Day was the beginning of the world's new year.

Horticulturists tell me that if our ears were quick enough to hear it we should know when the miracle of the new year takes place; it must inevitably be on or about Christmas Day. Vegetation has reached its nadir when things are at their darkest; it is not cold as much as darkness that forbids growth

and movement, as witness the snowdrops. Away, deep down in the earth, the roots and tendrils hide, shrivelled, inert, asleep. On Christmas Day the change begins; a new ray has found its way right down through sodden soil and dead leaves and incarnated itself in the life beneath; it stays there; it does not go back; and day by day more comes, and yet more, and yet more, and a whispering tumult begins everywhere underground, and in the trunks of the trees, and creeps along the branches and the twigs; and a heaving, straining, swelling goes on and on until the new life and the old break through together in the miracle of the springtime, and fields and hedgerows become decked in sudden glory. The beauty of bud and blossom, as of all the wealth of nature's summer colouring, is only sunlight blending with the flesh of flower and thorn. Is not this a continual parable of the work of Him whose life is the light of men? There are days even in the spring when grim winter seems to have resumed his sway, when buds and blossoms are destroyed in lavish waste, when the fresh green leaves burn and wither before the icy breath of the east wind; but it is never really what it seems; life may perish for a moment, but the light is still there and will prove the victor by and by.

So, too, must it be with the world war. It is a tempest that for the period of its rage seems to have destroyed all our idealism, a wintry blast that has torn up our fairest fabrics of optimism by the roots; but the silent light is steadily at work all the same within and beneath the far-spread chaos and destruc-

tion, perhaps even to some extent by means of it; Christ is coming to His own in the ruin of projects and objectives incompatible with it. A terrific shaking is going on in the world of visible values; but where is it stated on divine authority that the Kingdom of God would come without such? Nowhere that I know of—on the contrary. "He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

My friend the corporal was in a talkative mood the other morning. We were sheltering together under the flap of a hospital tent, one of those big, elaborate erections originally constructed for the Coronation Durbar at Delhi (so I am told), and now very sensibly made use of at the seat of war for the housing of our wounded. The rain was coming down in sheets, and everywhere around us the camp surface was like a muddy lake bubbling and seething with the violence of the deluge. When the rain stopped—if it ever did stop—the surface flood would clear off and the good old mud would appear again, seven pounds to each boot as we splashed and floundered through it. Rain! I have never seen such rain outside the tropics, and it seemed tireless. Day after day it went on almost without intermission, but on the present occasion it excelled itself and I was wondering somewhat ruefully how I should get to my own quarters without being thoroughly drenched for the second time that morning.

"Nice cheerful weather, ain't it?" remarked the corporal serenely. Nothing ever puts the corporal out of countenance, I may observe. "Reg'lar Christmas weather this," he went on without waiting for any reply. "The only kind of Christmas weather we ever see nowadays, blowed if it ain't. But if they ever tell me again that old England is the only place where we get it I'll tell them they're deluded. We've took a little trip abroad a-purpose to find out, and we know sure-*ly*.

"Reminds me of last Christmas," he continued in a reminiscent tone. "I was up at B—— then, and we had the Saxons opposite to us, not much more than fifty yards away. They didn't like the rain no more than we did, you bet; and they stuck as close to their dug-outs as they could; so did we except for necessary look-out duty. On Christmas Eve we started singing a few Christmas ditties. There was a big Yorkshireman in my company with a voice it was a treat to 'ear, and he sung, 'Once in royal David's City,' 'Christians, Awake,' 'O come, all ye faithful,' and things like that, and the rest of us joined in as well as we could. And then—would you believe it?—we heard the same tunes coming from the German trenches. They were singing 'em, too, by all that's good. They knew them tunes, every one of 'em—not the words, of course; they had different words, words of their own that sounded like a mixture of Welsh and Aberdeen, but the tunes were all right. After a bit, during a pause in the double performance, one of 'em gets up on their parapet and shouts: 'You English! Oh, you

English! Speak, you English! We are coming over.' We weren't having any for a long time, and stood at the ready for fear of treachery. But they kept on with their funny cry, 'You English!' And at last our sergeant says, 'Well,' he says, 'what d'ye want?' 'Christmas!' they shouts. 'Let's have it together, and no fighting.' As soon as we found they meant it we caught on, and we had a bully time. They were a great lot for singing, that lot were. We visited them and they visited us; and we shared up the provender as friendly as you please.

"One of our chaps got plugged in the leg by a sniper while he was taking a 'am across to their side to exchange for something they'd got. They rushed out and picked him up and carried him back to our lines and apologised, saying the sniper didn't know about the truce. Then they went off at 'im—the sniper, I mean—and brought 'im in, too, to explain and shake hands with the man he'd plugged. And we got more and more friendly after that, and mixed up anyhow, till at last orders came from the officers on both sides that the Christmas festivities had gone on long enough and were to stop, for we were getting into the new year, you see, and were making peace all on our own, so to speak, without waiting for the war to finish.

"But the Saxon fellows took a lot of stopping. They didn't want to fight, not they. In the end, to get rid of 'em we had to carry 'em one by one, a leg and a wing, back to their own trenches and dump 'em in. And they weren't all drunk either! No sooner had the dumping party got back to our lines

than a German officer jumps up and sits down on the parapet of theirs with his back towards us. 'Get down,' we shouted, but he took no notice. We kept on telling him to get down or we'd have to shoot, but still he took no notice. After a while we fired over his 'ead to frighten 'im. But, bless you, he didn't go then, and what do you think he did? 'E turns 'is 'ead over 'is shoulder without shifting 'is position, and 'e says, smiling like, 'Oh, you English, you think to frighten me. But I know I am safer with my back to you than if I turned my face.'

"What could we do? We couldn't kill the man, so we just had to let him be.

"The Saxons were moved soon after that, but before they went they told us that if Prussians were coming in their place they would signal to let us know. And they did. They put a board up, and all it said on it was 'Look out.' And we understood. The Prussians didn't try any of the brotherly love business. But ain't it wonderful what Christmas will do?"

It is wonderful, indeed. The birthday of the Prince of Peace is being celebrated this year as last amid the terrors of a world-war, but it is still a potent fact, nevertheless. All that is tender and gracious in human feeling seems to cluster round it and to become indissolubly associated with it. The spirit of the Christ-Child who was born in a stable and cradled in a manger will yet show itself stronger than Kaiserism and all its works.

Mr. Roosevelt is reported as saying that morally civilisation has gained nothing since the Napoleonic

wars. We are as predatory as ever and as ruthless. The law of the jungle is still stronger than the Golden Rule in the relations of states and individuals to all appearance.

Well, it may be so. It would be difficult to prove either way. What we have gained in one direction we may have lost in another, and *vice versa.* But my own experience is—and everything I have seen in the war zone only goes to confirm it—that the mightiest force in human affairs to-day is that which the Christmas festival celebrates. If, on the one hand, we are shocked and startled at the savage depravity of German military methods, we can but stand amazed, on the other, at the wealth of simple kindness that abounds, conjoined to the most heroic self-sacrifice.

For what a kindly creature Tommy is, with not a trace of vindictiveness in his composition. And he is a good deal of a sentimentalist too, one is surprised to find. Again and again I have been struck by the fact that in camp concerts the song that strikes the human note, the note of simple, homely joys, of heart's affection and loyalty, is the one most rapturously received. He is not particular, as a rule, to what Church you belong, or whether you belong to any Church at all, but you must not make light of the name of Christ. "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" will be sung with a will at many a point on the firing-line this Christmas, and Tommy will be conscious of no incongruity in the strange conjunction of experiences. He will be thinking of home and bright eyes and Christmas cheer, and in his mind

these realities will be bound up somehow with the greatest miracle of all the ages, the birth of Mary's child whose fuller advent by and by is to put an end to war for ever.

Among the patients I visited in hospital this week was a rubicund young chap who had come in with "trench feet," as they are only too accurately called. Imagine what it must be to fight up to your waist in water, especially if the water freezes in your boots. I have seen some ugly results from this, but we will not discuss them. This boy of mine had got the complaint badly and must have been in much pain, but, as usual, he was ready to make the best of it. "I never saw my boots for three months," he remarked with pardonable exaggeration. "They were never out of the mud, I quite forgot I had any feet, and was very surprised when they turned up again yesterday." Brave, light-hearted lad! He had no prospects of going home for Christmas, but was eagerly looking forward to the Christmas jollities that were being prepared on the spot. They are to have a Christmas tree there, I understand, with a thousand gifts on it. What a Christmas tree! Kind friends at home sent me out packages which went a long way towards furnishing it, but I shall not be able to stay to see it up as I should dearly like to do.

They are to have Holy Communion in the ward on Christmas morning, and then there is to be a day of such brightness and delight as generous hearts in England and equally generous hearts here can furnish. A French military band is coming in to

play to them—to play their own Christmas hymns if you please—and a great deal more besides. God bless the chaplains, doctors, nurses, and all others who are contributing in any way to make up to these heroes for what they lose at Christmastime through having to be absent from home, fighting our battles in a foreign land.

And a fine thing this boy with the trench feet has just told me. The Germans made desperate counter-attacks at Loos to try to regain the trenches our men had won from them. They failed, but the struggle was terrible while it lasted. Again and again they were thrown back with appalling loss, and, said my young informant, " one of our sergeants started the song, and every time we hurled the enemy off we sang with all our might, ' Keep the home fires burning.' "

It brings a lump to one's throat to hear testimony like this. Mr. Roosevelt is a healthy-minded man if there be one on this planet, and he knows that humanity's real gains are never to be measured by immunity from catastrophe, neither is its good destroyed by the impact of disaster in outward things. It simply is not true to say, as is so often done just now, that the war has either thrown us back morally or shown that any previous advance under Christian influences was only illusory. The world was a worse world, a more selfish and sordid world, before the war began than it is to-day. This is not to praise the war. One does not praise the fever that reveals the filthiness a man had in his blood when he thought he was well. When you are tempted to sigh over the failure of the promise

associated with the advent of the Prince of Peace nearly two millenniums ago, forbear. It is no failure, but a probation.

Is it Mr. Chesterson who sings—

> "The day is ours till sunset,
> Holly, and fire, and snow,
> And the name of our dead brother
> Who loved us long ago"?

The sentiment is receiving strange exemplification in the war zone at this advent season. One hears weird and moving stories which all point to the same thing—namely, that the veil between seen and unseen is getting thinner and the thought of the Christ-child more intense. Men are believing in the mystic significance of Yuletide who never paid much heed to it before save in the matter of bacchanalian riot. What is it they whisper to each other about the White Comrade who is seen passing over the field of battle and where He treads is peace and easing of agony to the stricken? It may be fancy, and it may not. Heaven is but a thought away even from the deepest depths of hell. Men fresh from the trenches tell me of the miraculous preservation of sacred emblems under shell-fire. A church will be shattered to pieces and the life-size Christus over the high altar left standing intact. The very glass and wire protection outside the shrine which encloses the image of the Virgin Mother and her Babe will be shivered into dust and the divine figures sustain no injury. Even an altar will be torn to fragments and the Blessed Sacrament left inviolate.

Are these tales true or the product of excited imagination? I know not, but they come from many quarters. Why should marble forms and features of painted wood be miraculously preserved when flesh and bone are rent and crushed? Again, I know not; may it be as a testimony that the tornado of human passion has no power to imperil aught that pertains to eternity? A group of soldiers, the sole survivors of a regiment, tell me they saw not long ago a church ablaze during a fierce engagement in the middle of the night. In the graveyard adjoining was a gigantic crucifix, and as the flames leaped up from the burning edifice it seemed to the awe-stricken watchers as though the white body upon the cross came to life and pointed with majestic hand away beyond the hell of man's making to where the gentle dawn was pressing through the eastern sky. It was a quasi-supernatural reminder that the ruin wrought by earthly evil reaches not so very far.

"Ah, m'sieu," said a Walloon peasant, "you see not the wonder of the Child-God here. You are too busy, m'sieu, and too safe, n'est ce pas? No one sees that wonder till he is prepared to die like the crucified, and then he knows assuredly that nothing holy can be killed, and that the royal Babe reigns even in the midst of strife and trouble, see you. Our good curé saw Him after midnight mass last Christmas Eve, vraiment. There was no church, m'sieu, no church left. The Boches had burnt it, and there were only blackened walls; and the altar—hélas!—the swine had made a table of it, and ate and drank and profaned the name of the Bon Dieu. But the

good father he said his mass for the living and the dead out yonder in the snow just the same. And then he saw Him—oh, believe me, yes—he saw Him on His throne above where the altar stood, and a shining crown upon His head, and His little hand uplift to bless, and before Him knelt all the dead of our village, m'sieu—my brothers Jean, Pierre, and my uncle, the sacristan whom they had stabbed in the doorway, yes. And the good sister, too, was there whom they had desecrated and then murdered, the sister who was the bride of Christ. And she smiled with gladness, and they all looked, oh, so happy. But you do not believe, m'sieu, for you are English and a heretic. But no?"

It is all true, every word of it, whatever be the symbolism in which the truth finds utterance. It reminds one of the vision of Sir Galahad at the sacring of the mass in his quest for the Holy Grail—

> "I saw the fiery face as of a child
> That smote itself into the bread and went."

But this was he, the pure of heart, who had also heard the summons—

> "O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me."

CHAPTER XIV

RETROSPECT

NEARLY a year and a half we have been at war now, and the blood total is mounting up steadily and grief and tears keeping pace with it. Once more we are approaching the last hours of an old year, the year in which it was confidently prophesied the war would end and end in our favour. Who will dare assume the rôle of prophet now? Looking forward is not an exhilarating business, but we cannot help looking back. Has there ever been a year like this in all our history, a year so packed with misery and sorrow, a year so heavy-laden with sinister portents for mankind at large? We can scarcely remember what the world was like before the war, so drastically different is the world of to-day; and yet we are compelled to think of it—wistfully, remorsefully, sadly as the case may be, but think of it we must. We did not know then what we know now, nor had we visualised what the future could bring as we are only too tragically familiar with it now. It is a changed world, and we are a changed people.

What have we learned in the grim period through which we have passed and are passing still? Well, for one thing we have had to realise that there are no short cuts to well-being. Was ever anything more

pitiful than the downfall of the hopes and dreams embodied in the social legislation of a few years ago by the Government whose chief representatives are still in power? When I went to America in the autumn of 1911 it was the one thing audiences over there wanted to hear about. England had inaugurated a new era, they said, an era of prosperity, contentment and justice for all. The rest of the nations would be bound to follow, even America. "The most democratic country in the world to-day," declared the chairman of one of my meetings in the middle west, "is not the United States, but Great Britain; it is giving a lead to all others in daring idealism, public righteousness, and the development of the arts of peace. We are watching with earnest and respectful attention your numerous notable experiments in the endeavour to evolve a brighter, happier, and nobler social order. The day of privilege is over; an international consciousness is dawning; and now, as many times already, it is England that is leading the way towards humanity's promised land." It made one's heart beat quicker to hear all this about one's native country from the lips of statesmen of another and younger nation. How proud I was and how confident! I believed all this myself, believed it ardently and without misgiving. Over and over again I had to tell the story of the Great Budget and the many economic reforms associated with the name of Mr. Lloyd George. And the questions that poured in afterwards! Whatever may have been thought in England at the time, there is no doubt that in the great Republic of the West our young Chancellor of

the Exchequer was popularly regarded as the Messiah of a new kind of civilisation, a civilisation that would get rid of the extremes of hopeless destitution at one end of the social scale and heartless luxury at the other, a civilisation whose chief note was to be the pooling and organisation of our common resources for the benefit of each and all—in a word, the christianising of human society. The shadow of militarism was scarcely felt at all—in America—and only occasionally made us uneasy over here.

Where has all that world of rosy visions gone to? We recall the fierceness of the struggle over the Parliament Act and the far-reaching social measures that preceded and followed it, and we wonder what we were raving about. Are we the people that prated of revolution, civil war, and all the rest of it? Was it, indeed, ever seriously contemplated to invoke military force to save the last remnants of feudalism? Where are the fire-eaters now who used to gabble in clubs about falling back on the army and forcing a *coup d'état* "to get rid of the junta that for the time being had gained control of the legislative machine and the king's person"? Where are the financiers who raised the cry of panic at the bare suggestion of having to pay into the Treasury a larger proportion of their unearned increment, or the landowners who vociferated that they must go to the wall if the exactions detailed in Form IV were literally to be enforced? How they one and all hated the little Welsh attorney! Where have they all got to and their woes? *O tempora! O mores!* O human consistency! Not a few of them are clamouring for

the little Welsh attorney to be made Prime Minister. As Minister of Munitions he has lifted more out of their pockets in a few weeks than in all the years of his chancellorship, and they complain not at all. But he on his part—I should like to know what he thinks. The world was not ready for his dream of the socialised state; it was worth dreaming, but human nature was not ready for it. And we had forgotten the Kaiser, or tried to think him only a bogey. Now we know what we know, alas! There are no devices, no schemes of statesmanship that will lift the race suddenly above its true moral level at any given time. No system, no proposal, no machinery will do it, nothing but effort, anguish, soul-purging; and even that we must endure one by one. We gain more of what is best worth gaining by suffering than by comfort. And our kingdom is not of this world.

We have learned, further, what we knew before, but did not care to dwell upon, that the chief feature of human lot is its instability and undependableness. As change takes place from day to day we do not realise this or we put it from us as an uncomfortable thought. But when some cataclysm comes such as this world war we are compelled to look facts in the face and reckon accordingly. I know of a man who had five fine sons. He was very proud of them, as well he might be, and they thought a good deal of him too. No one could observe the family without taking note of the brightness and *bonhomie* of its members with one another. The one grand set purpose of the father's life was that of securing advancement for

his boys. It was not an unworthy motive of action, and I do not suppose it ever entered his mind that there was any likelihood of its remaining unfulfilled unless something happened to himself personally, such as failure of health or premature death. To-day he is alive and well and all those splendid sons for whom he worked and planned lie in soldiers' graves in Flanders. Who could have foreseen it; and what is the man to do now who has thus, with such appalling completeness, been deprived of the light of his eyes and his one chief incentive to endeavour? Ah, if he were the only one!

But he is not the only one by many thousands. We have all lost some one or something through the war, and I should suppose there is hardly one among us who has not lost a great deal. The number of people who have lost practically everything, not only their dearest but their substance, been utterly ruined, in fact, by the sudden stoppage of their particular business, cannot be small. One wonders how many of them had reckoned with it as a possibility beforehand. And then the hold on life. What have such people left to hold on to? One must have something to live for, something as a point for one's energies, something to make effort seem worth while, or life becomes a burden and a weariness, "goes disspiritedly, glad to finish." There must be many in this mood at the present hour. A hurricane has swept through their place of habitation, their little world of hopes and dreams and customary duties, joys and sorrows, and left them standing alive in the midst of a desert. How are they to begin again? Stripped bare of all

incentive to action they discover, if they never knew it before, that no man can live to himself alone; the spice of life is in its relationships; take these away and it is over. I question if an absolutely selfish life has been ever lived or could be; it would be intolerable. Ours is a world of much kindness and of but little gratitude. The people we love the best are seldom those who have done the most for us; more often it is those for whom we have done the most. How frequently the cry of a mourner is that what he or she misses most in the blank silence of bereavement is the former joy of rendering service to the one who is gone! "He needed me so," they will tell you; "no one needs me now in the same way. I keep on thinking I hear him call, or my foot is on the stairs to go to him, and then I remember that he isn't there and never will be there any more."

No, life never will be again as it was yesterday; it changes from hour to hour. If its livableness consists only in the permanence of the experiences which to-day seem to us to give it its chiefest value we are doomed to unhappiness. They will not stay; they are bound to go soon or late, swiftly or slowly. And to some minds this is inexpressibly sad; it seems to cheapen human nature so. Why, we ourselves change with the passing of the years, change far more radically than, perhaps, at all times we should care to admit. Go back ten, twenty, thirty, fifty years, and see how your outlook on life has altered with them. The things you wanted, the people you loved, the events that had power to cause you pleasure or pain have all, or nearly all, undergone drastic transforma-

tion. You may even be a little ashamed of it. Are you the same person who longed for a particular gratification so much that you were almost prepared to cut your throat because you couldn't get it? Yes, in very deed; would you like to have it now? The chances are a thousand to one that you would not. And deep though some tragedies through which you have passed have set their mark upon you, you would not be honest if you did not confess that time *has* made a difference. You thought your heart was broken, and perhaps it was; you will never be quite the same man again; but you were wrong when you thought that that was the end of everything for you so far as this life is concerned; you have done and suffered a good deal since, and you will do and suffer more. You reproach yourself, perhaps, that you could so easily forget. You hate to think that a love which once absorbed your whole soul and brought out the very best that was in you could pass as the seasons pass and be no more than a golden memory, more and more dreamlike as year succeeds to year. But so it is; time is a wonderful healer and a still more wonderful magician, weaving his spells of oblivion over the brightest as over the darkest hours of the past. We may wish it were not so, but it is. Life seems to roll over us, as it were, without ever uniting us immovably to anything, good or bad, great or small. I am the same person that I was five and forty years ago; I have the feeling of identity, of unbroken continuity, though it would be hard to explain or justify it in any intelligible fashion. I am sure I am the same person, but

nothing else is the same to my perceptions to-day, either within me or without, that it was then. Beautiful things, glorious things, wonderful fellowships have come and gone; can it really be that they are as though they had never been? Is the very best and sweetest that can be lived or imagined in the intercourse of soul with soul here on earth no more than a mirage, a drifting cloud, a bubble on a stream? How the suggestion tends to lower their worth! And the cynic smiles and says, Even so.

> "Ah, my belovèd, fill the cup that clears
> To-day of past regrets and future fears.
> To-morrow? Why, to-morrow I may be
> Myself with yesterday's sev'n thousand years."

Is that all? If it were I should have nothing to write about, and all poetry and vision would be blotted out of human hearts. It is the outside of life, and that only, that is unstable and fleeting. The very things that to us in an ordinary way seem most solid and imperishable are the things that have the seal of death upon them, whereas our spiritual reaction to them, which seems so utterly ephemeral, is everlasting. It is selves that are real, not worlds. A child's glad cry at the sight of his father is a fact which in its essence will outlast the solar system. It is the brain that forgets, the soul never. You need not be ashamed that your memories even of tender and gracious things, things to which your heart is ever loyal, grow dim with the passing of the years; they have not failed nor diminished in intensity one iota; it is the poor dying body that has failed and

overlaid them with dust and clay. Have you never watched the miracle of the resurrection of buried faculty in the dying? You will sometimes hear them murmuring names you never knew; sometimes with wide-open eyes and radiant face they appear to be greeting persons you cannot see, as I truly believe they are. You will find them going back and back even to childhood's happy hours and living them over again with a peculiar gladness, a gladness that ignores nothing that lies between. Have you ever been close to the great transition yourself? I have more than once, and can bear witness that nothing is ever lost or forgotten that has once been an authentic possession of the soul, and the pain with which we have acquired it or parted from it for a season serves but to give keener joy to its recovery. It is all there, stored up in the subconscious deeps, and becomes more than ever ours when the illusions of sense no longer bar our apprehension of it. Thus to look back is to look forward, but with the shadows gone.

CHAPTER XV

OUR NEW YEAR OUTLOOK

SOME one nearly related to me once said that he found it impossible to view the approach of a new year without some measure of misgiving. The customary exchange of friendly greetings at this season caused him a certain amount of unconfessed perturbation. He never could hear the words, "A Happy New Year," without something akin to a shiver of dread. He could not help wondering what the new year had in store for the speaker and those he addressed, and whether it might not contain more sorrow than joy, be big with unforeseen catastrophe. You may call this morbid, and so perhaps it was, though the person I have in mind was not of morbid temperament; but there was a good deal to justify his attitude. Again and again he had noticed how friends of his, full of cheery anticipation at the beginning of a new year, had been visited by tragedy before the end of it, how those well and strong had uttered the ancient good wish to the weak and sickly and themselves been cut down by the hand of death within a few weeks or months, leaving the objects of their solicitude to mourn their loss in utter desolation. It was because of things like these, he said, that he rather shrank

from giving or receiving the conventional salutation, "A Happy New Year."

Many people will sympathise with him this year who would not have done so before. We cannot look forward lightheartedly after such a year of suffocating horror as that which has just closed. A year which has witnessed the *Lusitania* infamy and the massacre and rape of a million helpless Armenians, to speak of nothing else, will stand out in the annals of our time as one of peculiar darkness and depravity. That theatrical potentate, the Kaiser, who with the Junker caste deliberately made the war to save his dynasty and their order from being overwhelmed by the advancing forces of German democracy, has been issuing directions to his public for a sober observance of the season. There are to be no festivities, no gaieties within Berlin court circles or elsewhere that its influence extends. The War Lord thinks it unfitting that at a time when the Fatherland in particular and civilisation in general are enduring such unspeakable calamities there should be any attempt at merry-making—or, presumably, New Year greetings on the old lines, unless "Gott strafe England" can be considered such. He is full of pious exhortations and apostrophes as usual, but what about those slaughtered Armenians? They seem to lie lightly on the Hohenzollern conscience; but God is not mocked, and there will be a reckoning. Does he see it coming, I wonder? We on our part have now settled down to the war in grim earnest and there is not much optimism about. Any fancies we ever had as to a speedy termination of this bloody struggle are

over and done with, I should think. We know now what we are up against, though it has taken a long time to bring it home to us, and we are beginning to have a truer conception of what it is going to cost us. The war, the war, the war — we can think of little else, and we enter upon this new year with less buoyancy, perhaps, but more determination than last; less vapouring about the inevitable end, and so forth, but with a quieter, sterner, more thorough grasp of the whole situation and our wills set to see it through. That is all we can say; we dare not mortgage the future any more. Instead of wishing each other a Happy New Year—there is no harm in that, to be sure, but to many thousands of bereaved and sorrowing ones it would seem sadly out of place—we shall wish, and doggedly wish, and work, and sacrifice, and fight till our cruel foe is broken and the world is once more free to betake itself to happy laughter and song. The Germans know this as well as we, hence their frenzied hatred of us. Careful neutral observers tell us that their new hate, which we might call the 1916 brand, is born of fear, the fear which has replaced the old contempt. They have learned by now that they misunderstood us, underestimated us, saw us in a false light. No wonder they did, however — we gave them every opportunity. Truly we are a curious folk, or rather, most of my readers are, for not being an Anglo-Saxon myself, I am sometimes as puzzled by your temperament as the foreigner. Slow, deficient in imagination, undisciplined, often muddle-headed, fumbling and blundering his way along, somehow the Englishman

always gets there in the end. It is his tenacity the enemy fears now; he finds it is there still, just as it was a thousand years ago. John Bull will never give in; the worse things look the more he will grip hold and keep hold till victory is secured. In the process he will curse his own leaders and everybody else, high and low, as no German would ever dream of doing; he will wash his dirty linen in public with utter obliviousness of the consequences on the public mind of other nations, friendly or unfriendly. He does not care what anybody thinks of him; it would be better if he did. For a long time Germans believed that when Englishmen angrily criticised those who had the direction of the war, so far as our part in it is concerned, they must be panic-stricken and almost at the point of revolution. They know better now. They know that that bulldog grasp on their throat is not coming off till the menace of the mailèd fist is forever destroyed. Perhaps not all Germans know it even yet, but the knowledge is spreading rapidly, and it will not be possible much longer for official lies to hide it from the mass of the people.

And then what will happen? I don't know; nobody knows; but there are several things that may happen. Is it possible that we may refuse to treat with the Hohenzollerns at all? Will Germany have to find another mouthpiece? Will the gagged and silent multitude find its tongue? Will our arms set Germany herself free? It would be a wonderful result of the war if this should happen; it would be a war of liberation indeed, far beyond the scope of any statesman's forecast when it began. And

why not? As I have just said, there is small doubt that one great reason why the Kaiser and the privileged orders wished for war and provoked it was because they foresaw that within the next ten years social democracy in the Reichstag and in the empire at large would be strong enough to dispossess them and seize the reins of power. Like Napoleon III, forty years ago, they saw that the only way to avert this was to wage a successful war. And in this they calculated rightly. If Germany were to win in the present contest, the yoke of militarism, with all its anti-popular, anti-liberty accompaniments, would be riveted upon the necks of the German people more firmly than ever. But they thought England would keep out of it, or would be able to do litttle if she came in, and there they calculated wrongly. It is the cause of freedom and justice, as opposed to privilege and brutal tyranny, that rests on our arms to-day. A democratic Germany would not be a Germany to be dreaded by her neighbours, albeit a happier and more prosperous Germany than that which entered upon this conflict a year and a half ago. If Germany could be made a republic there would be no more fear of the violation of treaties and the menace of militarism. That is our real way of escape from a renewal of this wicked strife. Get rid of these military monarchies and you get rid of war. Democracies are never aggressive, history notwithstanding. They were no true democracies that made the wars of old. A Germany with the spirit of the United States, not to speak of our own, which is a democracy under monarchical forms,

would be a Germany at peace with all the world. With such a Germany we could and would form a pact of comradeship at once at the conclusion of the war. There would be no reason why we should do otherwise, and I believe no bitterness would survive between the two nations, as it is almost certain to do if Kaiserism and the military caste are left in the dominating position they now hold. This is one great thing to hope for as an outcome of the present terrible upheaval, a republican Germany or Germany and Austria, a United States of Middle Europe. In time we should all become members of such a Federation; and even if not we could almost afford to beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks. Give us democratic control in the monarchically ruled nations of the world and there will be no more wars.

This would be a thing worth fighting for, and probably it is what Europe is fighting for without knowing it. But we have got to win, and there must be no slackening of the pace until we do win. If Germany wins, the cause of humanity is lost for generations to come. I was going to say the cause of free institutions would be lost, the cause which assumes in every man a certain sovereignty, a certain value to the whole as a responsible, self-directing unit. But it is something much more serious than that. That, taken by itself, has happened before. The Roman empire—born of a republic, by the way—crushed political freedom, interest, and initiative while allowing the largest scope in other ways to the nations under its sway; and it is at least an arguable

proposition that this was a benefit to mankind in the long run, for the energy thus refused a political outlet ran into other channels and enriched the spiritual output of the world. But that would not be so now. Germany's conception of Kultur forbids. It is a tyranny over minds as well as bodies; it forces everything into the mould of intellectual efficiency for materialistic ends, and sacrifices all the finer sides of human nature to this monster of its own creating. The educational system under which her unfortunate youth are brought up presupposes that man is nothing but a brain and a body; the soul and its needs it ignores. Civilisation as a whole has suffered not a little from this danger. We have been measuring all our good in material symbols, making a fetish of progress, talking and acting as though we had no goal of endeavour but that which is bounded by the senses. Would to God that the world were poor, and simple, and clean. When we speak about the future do we ever stop to analyse what we mean? What would it matter to the mother whose only son lies buried in front of the German lines somewhere in France that ages hence a saner, sweeter society should live and grow on that same soil because he shed his blood there? How will it comfort a grief-stricken wife to be told that her husband was torn in pieces out yonder in Gallipoli that the England of a hundred years hence might be a happier, richer, more contented England than the England of yesterday? They would each demand to know, womanlike, what there was to be as compensation for the men who died to make this future possible, and what in

the way of comfort for their own stricken hearts here and now. There is something to be said for the Irishman who objected to working for posterity. "What has posterity done for us?" was his not unnatural inquiry. I say that every man whose bones lie rotting in French or Belgian earth to-day that England's future may be secured, must have a place and a stake in the grand result or the price was not worth paying. I look beneath all this agony and beyond all that politicians give as the reasons for it, and I see that it is a clash of ideals, a battle of souls that is going on; and in the long run that concerns, not perishable flesh, but immortal spirit.

We are going to win. Be sure of it. We are hearing much from our friends and our enemies about our appalling mistakes and the frightful toll they have exacted in human blood and anguish. We have made them, beyond doubt, and the story that will one day be told about them will be a terrible one, amazing in the fatuity and utter incompetence it reveals on the part of men we trusted and believed in. An officer remarked to me in France that if the whole truth were known now regarding the crass stupidity and gross negligence in high quarters which have squandered thousands of precious lives there would not be lamp-posts enough to go round on which to hang the guilty parties. This may be so; but not all the blunders have been on our side. The worst mistake of the whole war was perpetrated not by England but by Germany. In those first few awful weeks, when the German armies were sweeping southward and westward bearing our brave boys

before them, they had the greatest chance they are ever going to have of concluding the war speedily in their own favour—and they lost it. Paris was to them like a bunch of carrots before a donkey's nose. Their higher command was determined they should get there at all costs; so on they went in their mad rush, lengthening out their lines of communication, outstripping their transport, and finally left short of ammunition and in imminent danger of being cut off from their far-distant bases by a flank attack. That was why the sudden retreat took place which culminated in the battle of the Marne and the protracted trench warfare of the sixteen months that have followed. But note this: If the German higher command had made sure of the coast first they might, and probably would, have had Paris at their mercy afterwards and made our task immeasurably more difficult. Some of those who ought to know have told me that everything north of the Loire would have been in their hands. What was there to stop them? Calais was undefended; Boulogne was actually declared an open town. They had only to walk in and take possession, and thus prevent us coming to the rescue except by a much longer and far more dangerous route. They did not do it, and have lost their chance for ever. They have been fighting for Calais ever since, and will never get it, nor Paris either. Say what you will about the Dardanelles or the Balkans or what not; nothing we have ever done or left undone is comparable in its disastrous consequences to this colossal failure of the much-vaunted German military machine and its

up-to-date scientific methods as contrasted with our rough-and-tumble sort. We were not ready; they were. France was caught napping; they knew it. And yet they collapsed. The war was lost to Germany in the first three weeks. Let us take comfort; all the fools are not in England. We have nothing in our record as bad as that.

We have much to suffer yet, and perhaps for long too—who knows? There are many more tears to flow and many more hearts to break. God only knows whether we can bear the strain for the full period required for victory satisfying and complete. But it is more a question of nerve than resources, and I cannot imagine England's nerve giving way. We have a righteous cause and a clear issue before us, and these alone are assets of the greatest worth. We give ourselves and our best beloved in the strife, but we give both for an eternity in which every pang turns to power and every sorrow is swallowed up in joy.

So with a solemn yet cheerful confidence I wish all who read these pages a Happy New Year—in 1917 or may be later.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT IS HELL?

THIS is perhaps a strange subject for the pages of a popular publication, but it is the editor's choice, not mine; and I presume he has his own reasons for wishing to have it discussed at the present time. I have more than once remarked from the pulpit that there is no subject on which popular thought stands in greater need of being clarified. Within the past forty years or so there has been a marked tendency towards the rejection of the ancient belief in hell as a place or state of everlasting punishment for the wicked after death or after the general judgment. This change may be illustrated from the comparative silence of the pulpit on the question. Indeed, I may remark that the only time I have heard it mentioned in the pulpit within recent years, except by myself occasionally, was when Mr. Lloyd George spoke of it in his memorable speech in the City Temple in the autumn of 1914. It was very impressively done too. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, as he then was, turned preacher for a few moments in his appeal to all ranks and classes, and especially the young men, to come forward and do their best for their country in her hour of need. Would any man hang back through fear of death?

he asked. Death would come to all soon or late, and then what? "After death the Judgment," said the speaker in solemn tones, amid the deep hush of the audience. "After death the Judgment," he repeated. "If you have failed in your duty, with what feelings will you look forward to that?" It was a searching utterance, gravely and weightily made, and all the more so as coming not from a minister of religion but a statesman. I wondered at the time what others thought of it; my own feeling was that such warnings ought to be more frequently given in sermons and by the printed page if only we knew how to do it effectively. The revolt against the dogma of eternal torment as popularly construed has gone too far. It has led to a sort of vague indifference to the Last Things, as they are called—namely, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. I think it was Dr. George Adam Smith, the present Principal of the University of Aberdeen, who said some years ago that for a considerable period the tide of general interest had been steadily ebbing away from the shores of another life. And this is, I think, very true, though the causes of it are not wholly traceable to theological sources. It is not the omission of this or that doctrine from our pulpit discourses that is mainly responsible for the alteration in outlook on the part of the laity, but a far more complex set of factors of which our increased absorption in material and utilitarian concerns has been the chief. No doubt preachers do refer now and then to the punishment of sinners after death: I do not mean to say otherwise; but I should think any of them would

admit that they do it far less frequently, and with far less dramatic insistence than their predecessors of a generation or two back. At that and earlier periods the language of preachers when describing the pains of hell was often lurid and terrible in the extreme, and must have made their hearers shudder with dread. It would be no use employing that kind of language now, for no one would be moved by it in the least. Mr. Spurgeon was the last great preacher who habitually went far in this direction, but his was only a survival of the method of a race of mighty prophets who could paint the evil-doer's doom with such force as to work upon his fears and drive him to amend his ways. It must have been an awful sermon which caused the minister of a certain church to rise from his seat when Jonathan Edwards was preaching, and cry, with white and trembling lips, "Spare the people; oh, sir, spare the people." He would not need to say it now.

In some degree this is due to humanitarian considerations. It is almost universally felt that belief in hell and belief in divine love are not mutually compatible, especially if hell be unending. Even divine justice is difficult to understand in such a connection; for the worst sin that could be sinned hardly seems to deserve, on human analogies, an eternity of punishment. Then, too, we have come to think of the object of punishment as remedial and not merely vindictive. If our penal laws have not yet arrived at this standpoint the public conscience has. Society, in order to protect itself, has to inflict such penalties upon criminals as will deter others

from following their example, but it cannot reasonably be held that this motive would govern the actions of God. Most people feel, and very naturally, that if God visits wrongdoing with pain His object must be the good of the transgressor and not the vindication of His own dignity or the maintenance of His own security. A God who merely tortures the damned without hope of remission cannot, it is urged, or rather assumed, be benevolent in any intelligible sense. As Tennyson puts it—

"Hell? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told,
The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn for his gold,
And so there were Hell for ever! but were there a God as you say,
His Love would have power over Hell till it utterly vanish'd away."

It has further to be admitted that the traditional doctrine about hell was shaped in an age when there was less sympathy with human suffering and less sensitiveness than now. I make this observation with reserve, for we have had some sad disillusionments on the point since the war began. But on the whole it must be true. The late Sir James Paget is reported to have said that the nervous organisation of the civilised man of to-day is so much finer and more complex than that of the civilised man in the western Europe of, say, the sixteenth century, that there is no comparison in the amount of physical pain they could respectively bear. No ordinary man, he said, could stand the rack to-day for five minutes, whereas refined and delicate ladies endured it in the

ages of persecution without flinching. I am afraid that if I were put on the rack myself I should probably say anything my tormentors chose to put into my mouth, unless I died first of sheer agony, but our forefathers, Catholic and Protestant, were racked for days on end without giving in. The periods when the tortures of the Inquisition were possible, not to speak of the burning of heretics at the stake, were not periods when people in general could have felt pity for sufferers as they do now. When I say now, of course I mean in the case of the normal man or woman in a country like our own. A friend of mine, a distinguished surgeon, tells me he has seen a navvy brought into hospital with a great gash in his neck and shoulder caused by an accident, and while it was being stitched up—the subject refusing an anæsthetic—he maintained an animated conversation with a companion, and got so annoyed at some remark of the latter that in raising himself to contradict it he tore out some of the stitches and had to be told at last that if he did not keep quiet until the operation was completed he would be sent home to manage as best he could. Evidently this gentleman was not very sensitive to pain. The same is well known of Chinamen, North-American Indians, and African natives. What would kill an ordinary white man from shock will scarcely discompose them at all. One has heard of a Kaffir setting his own foot after it had been smashed by a cartwheel going over it. Some reader will very likely be thinking at this point: "Yes, and Germans could send the *Lusitania* to the bottom with hundreds of women and children

on board, and drop bombs from the sky on helpless folk sleeping in their beds, and perpetrate the most abominable atrocities on Belgian civilians whose only crime was that they had defended their homes." Just so; I admit it, as I admit the possibility of reversion to type in anything. But this monstrous development of German militarism is the result of a deliberate policy long entered upon and consistently carried out; I cannot think that any other civilised nation could be guilty of it. And, broadly speaking, we may surely admit without cavil that civilisation as a whole has outgrown it. We do not rack and burn people to-day, for the simple reason that we feel so much more keenly ourselves that we could not bear to inflict such torments, much less endure them. And we may fairly infer, therefore, that the elaboration of the doctrine of hell-fire as the world used to be familiar with it would not be possible now. It owes its existence to the fact that men were less sensitively organised at one time than they are now. For the moment I need say no more on the point. I am not arguing that the doctrine of divine retribution for sin owes its existence to the same conditions; that is a very different matter, as we shall see. But think of a time when monkish chroniclers, and even latter-day Puritans, could teach that the bliss of the righteous in heaven would be enhanced by their being privileged to witness the writhings of the damned in hell! The hearts that could conceive such a satisfaction must have been hard indeed. What Christ-like soul is there to-day, what man or woman of ordinary human feeling, who would not wish to

forsake heaven's bliss on such terms and go to the rescue of the lost?

But when all is said and done we must get hell back into our practical everyday belief, or rather we must get back a reasonable understanding of what it is, try to grasp and explain it in terms of the rest of our experience of life. This is a great want, I am persuaded, and our halting tones when we deal with it are not creditable to our Christianity. There is a hell, and men ought to be warned to shun it and shown why. If the universe is a moral order, that moral order must be vindicated against those who seek to violate it. Moral standards may and do change from age to age and race to race, but that there is an ideal right few would deny, or that it is our duty to try to find and obey it. There is a true line of development both for the individual and society; if we refuse to follow it we shall incur retribution somewhere and somehow, just as certainly as that if we live over a polluted drain we shall go down with typhoid, or if we form habits of intemperance we shall be sowing the seeds of corruption and early death. Any one can see this law operating on the physical plane, but perhaps it is not so obvious on the spiritual, though no less certain. Perhaps I ought to say here that there is a remedy against the spiritual destruction to which it inevitably leads, and that, as all Christians believe, is to be sought in the redeeming work of Christ; but into that I must not enter just now, further than to say that there is a point at which divine grace can on repentance supersede the terrible law of measure for measure, the

law of cause and effect, with which we are so familiar in the processes of nature. There is a valuable truth in Whittier's line, speaking of the Saviour—

> "To turn aside from thee is hell,
> To walk with thee is heaven."

Let it not be supposed that it is only God's sovereign act that sends this man to hell and that man to heaven. We could almost for the sake of argument leave God out of it. The sinner sends himself to hell by the way he lives. If evil living did not result in disorder, and did not recoil upon the transgressor, there would be something badly wrong with the spiritual universe. If for God we read the universal life the principle is just the same. If you sin you must suffer; the punishment may be immediate or deferred, but every sin carries its own punishment wrapped up in itself. Hell is being out of harmony with God, and it may take time before the dreadfulness of that is realised by the person guilty of it. It may take the whole of life to waken up to the fact that it is madness and folly; the full realisation may only come upon a man in the hour of death. To sin against God is to sin against your own soul, and in a sense you are your own judge. A gooseberry bush will not get typhoid, but a human being will, because he is constituted for a higher kind of life than a gooseberry bush, and if he does not live in harmony with the nature of that life it is in a sense his own constitution that punishes him; it is just because his physical nature is what it is that he has to suffer if he disregards the laws of health; those

same laws do not apply to the gooseberry bush. And so with the soul. We are spiritual beings, and as spiritual beings will fare accordingly as we follow the law of life which reveals itself in conscience and heart. The voice of conscience has often been called the voice of God, and so it is, but it is also the voice of one's own spiritual nature. It can be sophisticated only too easily, but if we are in earnest to find out what our duty is we shall never be allowed to go far wrong. We can defy and silence conscience, and in time it will cease to warn, but the inevitable awakening when it comes will be as terrible in its way as that of the man who has lived a life of fleshly self-indulgence and finds at length that he has contracted a deadly disease. In the late Robert Hugh Benson's *Light Invisible* there is one vivid sketch of the experience of a successful man of the world to whom this appalling revelation in the spiritual sense had come too late for him to be able to turn back in this world. The writer says: "What I gathered from the story was this—that he had identified himself, his whole will, his whole life practically, with the cause of Satan. I could not detect as he talked that he had ever seriously attempted to detach himself from that cause. It has been said that a saint is one who always chooses the better of the two courses open to him at every step; so far as I could see this man had always chosen the worse of the two courses. When he had done things that you and I would think right, he had always done them for some bad reason. He had been continuously aware, too, of what was happening. . . . God forgive me if I was

wrong—if I am wrong now—but this is what I think I saw. Out of his eyes looked a lost soul. As a symbol, or a sign, too, his eyes shone suddenly with that dull red light that you may see sometimes in a dog's eyes. It was the *poena damni* of which I had read, which shone there. It was true, as he had said, that he was seeing clearly what he had lost and would lose; it was the gate of heaven opening to one who could not enter in. It was the chink of light under the door to one who cried, 'Lord, Lord, open to me,' but through the door there came that answer, 'I know you not.' Ah! it was not that he had never known before what God was, and His service and love; it was just his condemnation that he had known: that he had seen, not once or twice, but again and again the two ways, and had, not once or twice, but again and again chosen the worse of those two; and now he was powerless."

Awful, but true—true of every one sooner or later who lives in deliberate defiance of what he knows to be the will of God, or rather of what he knows to be right. No man, I should think, ever deliberately defies God; he only goes on gratifying himself, choosing the worse instead of the better part, but it comes to the same thing in the end. It is impossible to live like that and be as though one had not done it, and the discovery of the truth when it comes is hell.

Many years ago, when the late Charles Bradlaugh was lecturing on the atheist platform he was tackled at one of his meetings in Nottingham by a young fellow in the audience who objected to some of his statements, notably his remarks about hell. "I

suppose," said Mr. Bradlaugh, "you are a believer in the bottomless pit." "Yes," was the young man's reply, "and so are you. I will undertake to show that you and every other rational being believes in the bottomless pit. If you see a man hardening his heart against good influences, stifling the reproaches of his better self, giving way to evil habitually, do you not know that he is falling into what is practically a bottomless abyss? What is there to stop him? Things he could not do without a twinge of conscience at first come easy to him later, and by and by he can do them without any remorse at all. Lower and lower he sinks until, humanly speaking, he is beyond redemption; nothing can alter him; he must go on from bad to worse." I think I am right in saying that Mr. Bradlaugh instantly admitted this as true to the facts of life. Neither he nor his opponent, of course, would have insisted on the inevitableness of any such destiny beyond the fact that a man can become so depraved as to cease to be amenable to appeals to his better nature, which at one time could have moved him to repentance. What is to happen to such a man in the next world? What can happen but that when the sources of his earthly gratification are struck away he finds himself in conditions with which he is totally out of harmony and suffers accordingly? It is no exaggeration to say that the wrath of God and the love of God are the same thing viewed from opposite standpoints. The wrath of God is the consistent opposition of God to sin, and what is that but the perfection which is love? Put a man with a diseased eye in a room flooded with light and

he will scream with anguish until he is shielded from the naked rays. The eye is made for the light, the light which reveals all the glory and the beauty of the world, but being out of harmony therewith it suffers unless it is darkened. So with the soul that is habituated to evil ways. It is made for the eternal light, and therefore it suffers when the veil of the flesh is torn away and it is exposed naked to the truth. Logicians may cavil at this phraseology, but hardly at the fact behind it; the analogy between the physical and the spiritual experience must be pretty close in this as in other things.

Is hell, then, a place or a state? I should say it is both, but especially the latter. Without assuming that the word is a geographical expression one may fairly infer from the language of Holy Scripture as well as from reasonable probability that there must be some difference in the conditions surrounding those who are in. enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven and those who are in the outer darkness; they cannot very well be sharing the same abode. But it is equally reasonable to suppose that there may be many spheres or states in the world beyond, according to the stage of development the soul has reached. There is some indication of this in Scripture, too, as witness St. Paul's words about the third heaven, and Dante and Swedenborg have elaborated the idea for us extensively.

"Abandon hope, all ye who enter here,"

is the inscription which the grim Florentine seer imagines as placed over the gates of hell, and he leads

his readers on through cycle after cycle of terrors, from the outer Limbo where dwell the comparatively blameless unbaptised to the deepest central pit into which the very wickedest are flung. The materialistic conceptions of the Middle Ages are thoroughly well illustrated in the *Inferno*. Swedenborg speaks of the "hells" and professes actually to describe them from clairvoyant vision as spheres of punishment adjusted to the culpability of the souls that respectively inhabit them. This seems likely enough. And it should not be forgotten that the word hell in the Bible covers more than a place of punishment. It would be unprofitable to discuss it minutely here. Suffice it to say that it is frequently used—in fact, one might say mostly—as equivalent to Hades or Sheol, the place of departed spirits in general, and does not necessarily carry with it any suggestion of penal conditions. It is different when it is used to translate the word Gehenna, about which more in a moment. The clause in the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell," thus means that our Lord, after His death on Calvary, passed through the abodes of the dead, declaring to them—so high authorities state—the same gospel that He had declared on earth. According to Dante again, He did not take much hope with Him, though. Thus he makes Virgil say (Longfellow's translation)—

> "I was a novice in this state,
> When I saw hither come a Mighty One,
> With sign of victory incoronate.
> Hence he drew forth the shade of the First Parent,

And that of his son Abel, and of Noah,
Of Moses the lawgiver, and the obedient
Abraham, patriarch, and David, king,
Israel with his father and his children,
And Rachel, for whose sake he did so much,
And others many, and he made them blessed;
And thou must know, that earlier than these
Never were any human spirits saved."

Virgil himself was in hell, be it noted, in spite of his virtues, if this uncompromising pupil of his is to be believed, and so was the whole pre-Christian human race, good and bad, with the above fortunate exceptions. Happily, we can think better of the justice of God than that.

There is a sense in which hell may begin here and now, when retribution follows hard upon the heels of wrongdoing. Heaven and hell may dwell in the same family circle, sit at the same table, sleep in the same bed. It does not matter so very much what your environment is as to whether you are happy or not. There is no much worse hell than the torture of remorse, for instance. As Milton has it in *Paradise Lost*—

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

Or the immortal Omar—

"I sent my Soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answered, 'I myself am Heaven and Hell.'"

But, properly speaking, the designation heaven or hell appertains to conditions following death, and strictly, even then, if one were minded to adhere closely to theological language, to the conditions of bliss or woe said to be unchangeable after the General Judgment, as it is called, the consummation or wind-up of the order of things under which we are living now. But we need not dwell upon that. The question of importance for us is whether the penalties upon sin which constitute hell here or hereafter are interminable; is there any hope of universal restoration? The doctrine of an intermediate purificatory state in which the souls of those who have not died in mortal sin are being cleansed from earthly stains, and are benefited by the prayers of the faithful on earth, is ancient and catholic and accordant to the feelings of most people. Few who make the great transition are fit either for heaven or hell, in the strict sense of the terms, and it is a natural thing to want to pray for those who have gone just as for those we love here. The practice of prayers for the dead would never have been challenged at the Reformation but for the corruptions that had come to surround it at that period. But can we go further and say that Purgatory is the only hell, that there is no other? for that is what it comes to if hell is not to be accounted everlasting. We do not know; there is always the faculty of the human will to be reckoned with, and its terrible power of sinking the soul into utter depravity; who can set bounds to it? But at least we may say this: that there is

nothing in the New Testament to justify any one in declaring that the punishment of sin is everlasting. "I am required to believe that there is a hell," said a Jesuit priest to me once, "but I am not obliged to believe that God will put anybody in it at all, much less for ever." "While sin continues, hell continues," declared a well-known bishop in my presence on a private occasion subsequently, "and when sin stops hell stops." "That is heretical," I replied, smiling; "it is distinctly contrary to a defined dogma of the Church Catholic." "So it may be," was the rejoinder, "but it is Christian." I quite agree with him; he may have said it in public for aught I know; I rather hope so. From what I have already said it should be clear that it is the state the soul is in that makes its heaven or hell; God does not change. Says St. Thomas Aquinas: "An innocent soul would not feel the pains of hell, and a guilty soul could not enjoy the bliss of heaven." "Eternal" is not synonymous with "everlasting"; it denotes quality of life, not its duration. It is what *is*, as opposed to what seems, the reality behind all flux and change. Now what is, as opposed to what seems, the reality behind all flux and change, is just that being of God of which I have already spoken as the source both of our hell and our heaven according to the way we come up against it. If we are out of harmony with it in any degree the result is pain; if we are in harmony with it the result is joy; but in itself it remains always the same—that

is why it can rightly be termed eternal. The eternal fire is always there, always a consuming fire to sin, it *is* the eternal; but it is home, and rest, and perfect bliss to goodness.

> "Thou judgest us, thy purity
> Doth all our lusts condemn;
> The love that draws us nearer thee
> Is hot with wrath to them."[21]

This is how I understand both eternal punishment and eternal life; it is simply a matter of our personal adjustment to what is an eternal fact, that which is.

When our Lord uttered the solemn warning about the worm that dieth not and the fire that is never quenched, He must have been thinking of something like this. When, in speaking of hell, He said Gehenna, He may possibly have been looking at the very spot that supplied the name, the sinister valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem, where criminals were formerly stoned to death, where worms preyed, too, upon the putrefying corpses, and fires were kept continually blazing to destroy the stench and burn up the corruption. In His vivid way He made this a figure of judgment to come, and every word of it is consistent with the view just expressed. St. Paul probably echoes the same thought in the striking passage: "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. . . . If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire," the fire that is

at once wrath and love according to what we bring to its embrace; the fire that, thank God, never can be quenched, for it is Himself. Let us beware how we trifle with it. To preach the love of God as though it were nothing but a weak, tireless amiability is the grossest of blunders. Being what it is, it can do no other than scorch and blast the soul that is conformed to evil. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."

CHAPTER XVII

REUNION

At the present time of almost universal mourning, there is one subject which in a quiet way engrosses attention to the exclusion of many others of minor moment, and that is the question as to whether and on what terms we may hope to rejoin those of our loved ones who have preceded us through the gates of death. One sees but little of it in the papers, but that is mainly because the things we talk about in the papers are not usually those on which we feel most deeply. Even the pulpit is reticent in its references to it. And yet one meets it again and again, and it is clear that people are thinking of it to a degree unprecedented. When the young and strong are taken away from us in such numbers as now, it is but natural that this should be so; we feel the pressure of the problem more than in normal times. When the aged enter into rest it is like the finish of a song, but when youth perishes in the furnace of war it is like an interrupted symphony and we long to hear it resumed. Bereaved parents, wives, sisters, and lovers all over our land to-day are listening wistfully for some real message of comfort in this regard. Whether they can get it is another matter.

Does life go on or does it finish with the shock of death? Assuredly it goes on, but how? that is the point. Nothing ever dies except as that particular thing: it only changes its form, its mode of being. This is a simple fact beyond dispute; our interest is not in immortality as such, for any kind of life is immortal, but in whether it can be predicated of the fellowship of soul with soul. Maurice Maeterlinck has a striking passage in his book, *Our Eternity*, which states the issue forcibly when he points out that what we are really afraid of in the thought of death is the destruction of our identity. "It is utterly indifferent to us that, throughout eternity, our body or its substance should know every joy and every glory, undergo the most splendid and delightful transformations, become flower, perfume, beauty light, air, star — and it is certain that it does so become, and that we must look for our dead not in our graveyards, but in space and light and life—it is likewise indifferent to us that our intelligence should expand until it takes part in the life of the worlds, until it understands and governs it. We are persuaded that all this will not affect us, will give us no pleasure, will not happen to ourselves, unless that memory of a few almost always insignificant facts accompany us and witness those unimaginable joys." Yes, quite true: we do not feel that an immortality which fails to carry with it the continuity of individual self-consciousness is of much value. The elements composing my body at this moment were in existence a million years ago and will be forming new combinations a million years hence,

some of them, doubtless, far more elaborate and wonderful organisms than I have ever been, but they will not be me. (Forgive the colloquialism; it is badly wanted, and will be good English some day.) And what would it matter to me if the mysterious life that is mine now were to be withdrawn into the universal life out of which it came, and my pin-point of consciousness be merged in an infinite consciousness, if at the same time I lost all memory, all recollection of myself as myself? To all intents and purposes I should be as dead and done for as if life ended at the grave. And, moreover, all that to our experience at present makes life livable is bound up with this. If it is not spiritual it is worthless. As human beings we truly live in our relations with each other; and all the words that to us connote great, beautiful, and inspiring ideals are words that assume these relations. What meaning would honour, fidelity, tenderness, sacrifice, have apart from these; and where would be our humanity without them? It would not be humanity at all.

So it really comes to this, that when we talk about immortality we mean the persistence of the individual self, with its memories, loves, and fellowships. We do not mean simply going on; still less do we mean that life as a whole goes on, that the substance composing us goes on. We know it does, but the fact does not interest us much. De *we* go on?—the we who mingle together in all those attachments, services, mutual associations and affinities that are the stuff out of which all our highest hopes and dreams and ends and aims are constituted. And if we

individually go on do we take up the thread of earthly relationship anew in the sphere beyond death, whatever it may be, or is death the finish of all that? Shall we know and love again in some brighter world the people we have known and loved here? I repeat that this is the only sort of immortality that is really worth anything; and I re-emphasise the point that all that is best and noblest in us looks to this kind of immortality or to none; we have no other sort of experience that makes the prospect of an immortality denuded of these things in the least attractive. It does not follow, of course, that the mere fact of surviving the shock of death implies immortality. We might wake up on the other side of death and go on for awhile and then flicker out; it is at least conceivable. But the presumption is that if we—the real we—can survive physical dissolution at all we shall continue to survive for ever. The principal point on which we want to be convinced is that the death of the body is not the death of the man. There may be great changes, immense changes, in the quality of the consciousness that survives; it may go on changing and enlarging for ages; but if we could really be assured that, as the Bishop of London once said, a man is much the same person five minutes after death that he was five minutes before, we might fairly take for granted that he will continue to know himself the same person for ever after, even if he grows to be a demi-god. It would be no comfort to anybody to be told that the person or persons he or she loved best in all the world were still living after death had claimed them, but they

no longer had any knowledge or recollection of those who mourned their loss on earth, or, indeed, of anything that had to do with earth. They might just as well be extinct; if the old friendships are dead, they are dead too; if memory is gone, they are gone; they are as completely new beings as if they had never existed before.

Now, having said all this, I want to add, as clearly as I can, that we have the best possible ground for believing that the immortality I have been describing as alone desirable is a fact, and, therefore, that reunion after death is a fact too—an indefeasible fact, as much a fact as that I who write and those who read these words exist now. We shall never stop, and our inter-relations with other beings will never stop. Let no one ask me how I know this; I do know it, and that is all I can say. No one can ever absolutely reproduce for others the evidence that satisfies himself on the deepest things. But I hold that the fact of survival after death has been proved up to the hilt over and over again, and is being demonstrated still to thousands of bereaved ones, despite the prepossessions of this materialistic age of ours. And I am not thinking of the cult of necromancy when I say this; it is a practice attended with grave dangers, as the Church has long ago recognised; but that communication between the living and the so-called dead has frequently been made and is still being made, is to my mind beyond all doubt. Whether it is well that it should be habitual is another thing. I should question it on the ground that it is surely undesirable to drag our emancipated dear ones back

into earthly conditions; far better speed them onward by our loving thoughts and prayers, and yield ourselves to the good influence of theirs for us. There is such a thing as spiritual communion, as the Church has always taught; it is one of the tenets of our faith. Why, even between beings still in the flesh there is often such sympathy that thoughts and feelings can be transmitted from one to another across great intervening distances. One senses what is happening to the other, so to speak, or is aware when the other is specially thinking of him or her and pouring warm, loyal, benevolent wishes upon him or her. How the knowledge of it often helps and sustains us through difficult and trying circumstances! Many a soldier at the front to-day is not only the better for what he knows is reaching him hourly from the heart of mother or wife, but owes to it more than he knows. Is it going to stop if he gets killed? Assuredly not; it will but reach him more easily then, for there is no longer any fleshly barrier to the spiritual tide.

And in a few short years at most we shall all have entered upon that higher side of life, and be learning lots of new things. It is probable, for instance, that we shall learn to transcend all imprisoning affections. Do my readers know what I mean? Love is the greatest thing in life, to be sure—the only thing that makes continued life desirable, as I have already shown—but our earthly love is a poor, restricted thing compared with what love might be in a higher state of existence. We are only able at present to love a very few people intensely,

though we may be so happy in this love as to feel kind to everybody. But we cannot actually love everybody as we love our own nearest and dearest. Now, is it not both imaginable and desirable that, without ceasing to love those we love now, we might attain in time to a state of consciousness so much vaster and higher that we could love a myriad souls or more with the same devotion that we now give to one or two? In other words, would it not be a glorious thing to be able to love as we have always been taught that Christ loves, as if every soul were the only one in the universe, so strong would be our regard for that soul and so discriminating, but with an all-inclusive scope and range, none omitted, none forgotten, none rejected or despised. That would be heaven indeed, a state of universal good-will, and therefore of a joy beyond all our present powers of mind to conceive. Perhaps that is why St. Paul speaks of it as, "to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge"—that is, passeth knowledge now, but not always; the day will come when we shall get up to it in the life elysian.

What is called natural affection may therefore have to become merged in something higher, but without being either dimmed or destroyed. I cannot doubt it myself. It will never become indifference; it will only cease to be exclusive. And I believe, too, that the rather sad fact, sad from one point of view, which none of us can help observing, that the dead are soon forgotten, is more or less an illusion. It is a merciful thing that time does take the raw edge off grief, does heal the deepest wounds of the

heart in most cases; but it is not quite what it seems. It is the mortal part of us that does the forgetting; the immortal part, the true, imperishable self, holds on to its own and reasserts its claim, but on newer and higher levels, when the body is laid aside. What would you say if some one you loved with the whole force of your nature forty years ago were to walk into the room? You might be overcome with delight, or you may have grown so far away from that early stage of experience as to be utterly unmoved; but wait till death comes, and you will see that what was truly spiritual in that relationship will instantly leap back to its place in your soul and all else disappear with the worn-out garment of the flesh. And, oh, how many there are who are simply waiting for this great change to take place, with whom a beautiful love of early life is as fresh to-day as it ever was, and who are looking forward with patient eagerness to the everlasting morning!

> "O, thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again,
> And with God be the rest."

Memories may fade, sorrow and heartbreak die down, familiar faces recede with the passing of the years; but all the precious fellowships of old will come back on a securer plane of possession, an altitude where there are no rival claims to be adjusted, no jealousies and littlenesses to be feared.

There is a difficulty in imagining life in heaven. What we love, or think we love, in our friends and kindred is so closely interwoven with the physical organisation that it is no wonder we are inclined to

identify the two. We long and yearn for the familiar associations—

> "For the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still."

But in a world where there is no eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage, intercourse must be different. Speech is a clumsy instrument at the best for the conveyance of ideas; and shall we never get closer to one another than tongue and embrace can take us? Yea, verily, we do it even now in the hours when silence gives the sweetest communion—a fore-glimpse of what is to be when the physical medium is gone. And the most familiar face and form are changing before our eyes hour by hour; there is nothing permanent, nothing of eternal worth, in the purely physical; it is but as the sacrament of spirit that it has value, though that is much. But the essence of what we love is always invisible. No man has ever yet seen a soul, and it is that invisible that cannot die.

CHAPTER XVIII

IMAGINATION AND THE FUTURE

UP to the present this country has not been hard hit by the war. Those who say so do not know what they are talking about. Mourners we have in plenty, and are like soon to have many more; individuals once prosperous have been impoverished through the sudden stoppage of their particular business or source of income owing to the diversion of the nation's energies into other channels. Most of them will recover in time if they can hold out, but not yet; and we can only marvel at the patience and self-control exhibited by these unfortunate ones whom economic disturbance has victimised; we hear almost nothing about them, so silent are they and so ready to accept the inevitable; but they exist, and some day, perhaps, may become articulate. Their story is as well worth telling as any one else's. But on the whole we, as a people, have not suffered much so far, nothing comparable to Germany, and nothing to be mentioned in the same breath with little Serbia and helpless Armenia. While in France I frequently expressed my astonishment at the apparent exchange of rôles between the French and the British in the war zone: the former sombre and stern instead of light-hearted and gay, the latter just the reverse.

The Englishman seemed to have borrowed the Frenchman's characteristics for the nonce, and the Frenchman to be exemplifying in his own person what used to be said of the Englishman, that he took even his pleasures sadly. In seeking a reason for this one received several different explanations, of course. My own view was, and still is, that Tommy's cheerfulness is part of his notion of honour; it is playing the game as he understands it. He is not enjoying his task; it would be folly to say so. It is too horrible and altogether dreadful for that. But he feels he must make the best of it, and therefore he must act like a sportsman even to the extent of keeping up his own spirits and those of his comrades by every means in his power, and one of the most potent of these is laughter and song. This, I believe, is the sole secret of the brightness of demeanour we hear so much about among the troops at the front; it is a lesson to us at home. But I am bound to admit that other and less flattering accounts of it were given me. Some officers declared that it was merely due to the thickness of Tommy's head. This sounds insulting, but it was not meant to be; those who said it are admirers of Tommy and share his dangers and hardships daily. They only hinted at a certain dullness of imagination which prevents the average Briton from realising, as the more sensitive and quick-witted Frenchman is bound to do, the terribleness of the task in hand. There may be something in this, though how much it would be impossible to say. How men who have been in the trenches, exposed to the horrors of shell fire and, in

the judgment of many, to the still more appalling horrors of bayonet fighting, not to speak of the constant rigours and miseries of life in the open under the prevailing weather conditions of these winter months, can be fairly described as failing to realise what is taking place I do not know. I still hold by my own theory of the matter.

But this at least is true: we here by our own firesides, safely sheltered from the enemy by the guns of our Grand Fleet and the heroic exertions of our sons and brothers in France and Flanders, do not and cannot understand what war is like as our brave allies do, or as we ourselves speedily should if it were raging in our midst. No contrast is more striking to a traveller than the contrast between this side of the channel and the other in regard to the immediacy of war, so to speak. It was the first thing I noticed when I crossed last February, still more in July, and abundantly more in October. Here on the outside of life is little observable difference: there the difference is everywhere apparent. There is a different *feel* about France, somehow—the war is in the air as it certainly is not in England even now, after all these terrible months of bloodshed and strain. This, remarked the elderly head of a military hospital staff to me, is the real reason why the British soldier is not so grim-looking as his French brother-in-arms. He very soon would be, so should we all, if we had seen our country invaded, our homes knocked about, and our women maltreated as French people have had to see theirs ever since the autumn of last year. Let the Germans

plant a couple of million of men in our home counties and lay our fair land waste with their usual thoroughness, and there would be little disposition left for indulging in pleasantries of any sort.

No, we have not been sorely hit by the war—not yet. One of the strangest paradoxes about this period of destructiveness through which we are passing is that there is very little dire poverty about. It has taught me a lesson, a lesson which probably the workers as a class are assimilating too—namely, that destitution and the degradation which so generally accompanies it *could be got rid of in a month* in time of peace if we were only in earnest to do it. It is caused simply by an unfair distribution of wealth. We always knew that, but what we did not know was that it could be so speedily remedied; we thought it would take a long time even if the nation were willing to tackle the problem seriously, which it has not yet shown any anxiety to do; we were afraid of drastic experiments of a social nature, with the consequent displacement of capital, the shock given to that very delicate entity the national credit, and so on. "Go more slowly," was the universal cry; "give us breathing space; these drastic changes one after the other—all in the direction of making the rich pay more into the pockets of the poor—are very dangerous. You are impairing public confidence; do wait awhile before you attempt anything further. You are imposing a tax on industry which is certain to hinder productiveness. Call a halt; turn the present Government out—meaning the Government responsible for Lloyd George finance—and let us

have one which will give us time to recover from the inroads it has made upon the big incomes. Old Age Pensions and the Insurance Act need paying for, and who is going to do it? Let us see whether we can meet this obligation before incurring any new ones." This was what we all thought more or less; we did not know how much the national resources could stand; we were terribly afraid of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs—namely, the employer and his profits with their bearing on commercial enterprise generally. There were numerous experts, financial and otherwise, who assured us we had already done it, and that the country could never recover from this wild-cat legislation and the drain it had made upon our material reserves of all sorts. Politics had become class war and little else, and I am pretty confident that if a General Election had taken place before Germany struck the verdict of the electorate would have been in favour of putting the brake on for awhile. I know plenty of admirers of Mr. Asquith and his forceful Chancellor of the Exchequer who thought it was time to say so. Doubtless the Kaiser and his advisers were awake to this and shaped their policy accordingly.

And we were wrong, the whole lot of us—Kaiser, German Bureau, British Tories, hesitant Liberals, landowners, bankers, manufacturers, shopkeepers, taxpayers generally, and probably the proletariat too. It is nothing short of amazing. Here we are hurling our accumulated stores of wealth into hell, the hell of war, and the workers as a whole were never so well off. We are able to pay, and we do

pay, without complaining. We are doing it without suffering very greatly, without hearing the cry of hunger going up from our congested areas as it has too often done in time of peace, and without the slightest apprehension that we are drawing near to the end of our strength. We shall be able to go on doing it for years if need be. The savings of the working classes have hardly yet been touched for national purposes, and if report speaks true there has been a not too creditable increase in the purchase of cheap luxuries — and luxuries not commonly accounted cheap, also, such as pianos—among a section of these, unskilled labourers especially. They are not unpatriotic, but is it to be wondered at that they should suddenly feel themselves well-to-do and fail to realise that war is economic wastage as well as wholesale murder? "Three pounds a week, and no 'usband!" a lady engaged in munition work is credited with saying. "Wy, it's 'eaven!" There is humour in the sentiment, one must confess, though it was not complimentary to the absent husband. There was some hard drinking in Dublin last year after the maintenance allowances began to be paid—Dublin was not the only place, by the way—and it is stated that some outspoken females declared they wished the war would go on for ever on the same terms; they had never had so much money to spend in their lives.

We are not only squandering wealth and manhood in this insane business of war—though we had no choice in the matter but to fight or perish—not only destroying the slowly built up total of our national

savings in the effort to inflict a still greater destruction on those of the enemy, not only causing world-wide havoc, mourning, and woe, but we have withdrawn not less than four million men from productive occupations and set them to smash and kill instead. Think of it! and then remember that these men have to be equipped and maintained somehow or other by the rest of us, and that most of them are the very pick of the country's early manhood. And we can afford to do it! We can do it and in the process make an end of destitution for the time being and secure to wage-earners a higher standard of comfort than they have ever enjoyed before. Will the electors of Great Britain, rich and poor, try to digest that fact and grasp its implications? The logic of it is that we can, if and when we choose, get rid for ever of the crying disgrace of starvation and misery at one end of the social scale and senseless ostentation at the other. The thing is demonstrated now.

When the war is over we shall have an amount of distress to cope with that we do not visualise at present, and economic problems will emerge which will tax our statesmanship to the utmost. We shall have tens of thousands of maimed and crippled soldiers on our hands, and a gigantic national debt on our backs which will be a crushing burden for generations to come. We shall hear of unemployment then with a vengeance; and we have a convenient way, to judge from the precedent of former wars, of forgetting the debt we owe to the man who has given up his place in life to go and fight for us

and been made incapable of earning his living in consequence. Perhaps that will not happen this time. I found, while addressing soldiers' meetings in France this autumn, that our fighting men are quite alive to it and determined to prevent it if they can. Nothing roused more enthusiasm in the course of our discussions than any expression of resolve that when the war is over no effort or sacrifice shall be spared in seeing that justice is done to the claims of those who have suffered in our cause, not least the fathers of families who have been permanently invalided by what they have gone through. Again and again one met men who had held good, well-paid positions at home and given them up to go and serve in the ranks. The orderly who waited on me at mess on several occasions was, or had been, a wealthier man than any officer at the table. At almost any service I ever held I would be addressed afterwards from the floor by privates or non-commissioned officers whose very accent showed them to be men of education and good breeding. The army as it exists to-day is a fine, all-round leveller; a good many artificial prejudices and social distinctions are being swept away by the power of actual daily comradeship in the face of death. These four million citizen soldiers have votes: how will they use them when they come home? Is it conceivable that they will either forget, or allow us to forget, that a first charge upon the national exchequer for long to come must be the proper maintenance or the reinstatement in their callings of those who did not wait to be fetched, but sprang to arms to defend their country,

and have done it at a great cost in body and substance?

Let the lesson be driven well home: we can do all that is required if we want to do it. Behold the economic miracle of to-day, and consider what is possible to-morrow. There need never be another hungry mouth; no honest man ought to have to dread the loss of a job or to lower his self-respect by seeking the aid of the Poor Law. It is all nonsense to say that the problem of destitution is unsolvable, or that our resources will not bear the institution of a standard living wage for *everybody* and not for the aristocracy of labour only. After the débâcle of 1871 France was apparently ground to powder, her manhood decimated, her trade ruined, her treasury empty, and an enormous indemnity to pay to her triumphant foe. She recovered so quickly and completely, to the surprise of everybody, that in 1875 Bismarck, like the bully he was, wanted to hit her again, and would have done so but for Queen Victoria and the British Government. All Europe will be in a like position by the time the present war is over—Great Britain the least so probably. The indemnity we shall have to pay will be to ourselves—namely, the capital and interest of the great war loans that have been successively raised. It will be a tremendous task to do it, and we shall have all our industry and commerce to organise afresh. But it can be done, that is the main point to keep before our minds. It has been done before on a sufficiently large scale to afford us example and encouragement. Let us be ready for it. Do not let us drift and

muddle till the problem is upon us in an intractable form. If we can do what we are doing now when we are daily destroying more than we create, what will it be when we cease to destroy and begin to build up once more? We can do it better then and without risk of failure if we are careful to avoid loss of time in preparing for it. It is all a matter of organisation and united will.

A New Zealander was lecturing some of our Tommies on our national deficiencies. His language was lurid; he had been provoked thereto by some caustic remarks made by a British officer on Australian lack of discipline. "Anyhow," he yelled in conclusion, "we do know enough to know there is a war on, which is more than you do in your back number of a country. You will wake up to it, I reckon, by the time it's finished with, unless we have to come over and hammer it into your heads. And whatever you do when you win"—the implication in this phrase surely would soothe the wounded *amour propre* of the slowest-going Briton—"be sure you make the Germans send over their best men to teach you how to feed and clothe and educate your people; it would be the best indemnity you could wring out of them, and the only one they will be able to pay."

CHAPTER XIX

REORGANISATION AFTER THE WAR

In the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* of January 16 appears a friendly criticism of my article of the week previous. It is from the pen of Mr. James Sherliker, and traverses, or professes to traverse, statements of mine in the article in question, which was mainly concerned with the problem of destitution and its relation to the war, and is reprinted as the chapter above.

This criticism demonstrates a thing I have noticed over and over again, that few people, even among the educated, ever take in an argument as a whole. They seize on bits, often unimportant bits, and worry away at them without allowing for their due proportion to the rest. Generally, too, they fail to perceive that their objections in regard to these bits have been anticipated in the argument itself. I have had occasion to observe this so frequently that it is no surprise to me to find Mr. Sherliker doing it in this instance; I daresay I do it myself when reading or listening to other men's words. Perhaps, in addition, I may be to blame for having written obscurely, but I don't think so; and in reading the article over again I see little to alter in the phrasing and nothing in the opinions expressed. One of my

fiercest opponents in the theological field said years ago that I possessed the fatal gift of lucidity—or was it the gift of a fatal lucidity? I forget. I believe he added that it was about the only gift I did possess —but that is neither here nor there. I took his remark as a compliment because he was supposed to be something of a judge in such matters, and still is.

But let the facts speak for themselves. Here are Mr. Sherliker's criticisms seriatim, and it will be seen that every single one of them is answered beforehand. There is practically no difference between us, and the only reason why I return to the subject is that I am anxious to get as many people as possible to consider seriously the main point of the original article—that the war has proved that destitution can be got rid of, and speedily, if we are really in earnest about it. And if we are not in earnest about it we had better look out when the war stops, for then the distress will be terrible.

Mr. Sherliker: "There *is* poverty in this war, and a great deal of it. The war has increased incomes, I admit, but it has also increased the cost of living. There are hundreds of thousands of people in this country, pre-war widows and the like, who know nothing of separation allowances, but who, unfortunately, know a great deal about the extra cost of food. The war *has* brought poverty about; it has increased poverty."

The article: "Individuals once prosperous have been impoverished through the sudden stoppage of their particular business or source of income owing to the diversion of the nation's energies into other

channels . . . we can only marvel at the patience and self-control exhibited by these unfortunate ones whom economic disturbance has victimised; we hear almost nothing about them, so silent are they and so ready to accept the inevitable; but they exist." "Here we are hurling our accumulated stores of wealth into hell, the hell of war, and the workers as a whole were never so well off." "We are not only squandering wealth and manhood in this insane business of war . . . but we have withdrawn not less than four million men from productive occupations and set them to smash and kill instead."

Mr. Sherliker: "I agree with Mr. Campbell that there need not be hungry mouths when the war is over; there need not have been hungry mouths before the war began. But when he says that no honest man ought to dread the loss of a job after peace is declared he tells us that he has never been out of a job himself, that he has never had to look for one, and that he knows nothing of the haunting anxiety as to what the morrow may bring. . . . When the war is ended we shall return to the old conditions—or worse. . . . What about when the million boys come home to return to their former occupations? What about when at least half the munition works close down? . . . Will Mr. Campbell explain why no honest man will then need to dread the loss of a job?" Evidently my critic has missed the point altogether here. He then goes on to point out the plain economic fact, as he calls it, that for a long time there will be more men than we can find work for, consequently unemployment, and probably, too,

a fall of wages. Employers will not be able to pay to the State and to the wage-earners too.

The whole purpose of the article was to show that this need not be. Mr. Sherliker says things will be again as they were before the war, and worse. Will they? That depends upon ourselves. From what we only too sadly know of our muddling, bungling methods as a nation they very likely will, but not if we prepare against it. I did not say that no honest man would need to dread the loss of a job; I say he ought not to have to dread it, and there is no need that he should. The paradox of the war is that what the public generally thought we could not do in time of peace when we were piling up wealth we actually have done in time of war when we are recklessly squandering wealth. No one can deny that; it is a truly marvellous thing. For the time being we have abolished destitution; are we going to let it return? Can the community afford to let the wasteful struggles of capital and labour continue? Are we going to be fools enough simply to bring our soldiers home again and discharge them, while at the same moment closing down the munition factories, and throwing this vast mass of unorganised labour idle upon the market? Again I say it is not unlikely, judging from our previous methods; but cannot measures be taken beforehand to prevent it? They could if we would. A society already exists for dealing with the problem which will then be upon us; but what earthly use is one voluntary society in face of a vast, complicated issue like this? The whole nation should be facing it, and the best brains

of the nation be at work upon it with Government authority and support behind them. If not, the sufferings that will follow upon the conclusion of peace will outvie those of war.

The Lord Mayor of London has already taken action upon one aspect of it in calling together a great conference at Guildhall, representing all the big commercial and industrial towns, bankers and merchants, and employers of labour. The object of this gathering was to organise British trade and commerce so as to prevent the enemy countries from gaining an undue advantage over us again in these respects in spite of all our fighting. This is all to the good; we can but rejoice that it is being thought of in time; but we want more than that. We want a bold policy adopted with regard to labour. At the risk of being tedious I must remind my readers once more of what the war has *proved*. It has proved that in a period of waste and destruction we can suddenly afford to pay a living wage to practically all workers. *Suddenly*, remember! All at once we wanted all the labour we could get, and we used it and paid for it at a higher rate than before the war began. True, the cost of living has gone up too, but not in the same proportion. This is only a personal opinion, I grant, and would take some proving, which I have not the means of doing at present; but is it not plain to everybody that there is not the same amount of distress about that there has been in winter time in former years? Mr. Sherliker advises the workers to save against the hard times coming: are they saving? Such is not the

evidence available. They feel more comfortably off than they were, and no wonder, but it is hardly to be expected that they should as quickly realise the necessity of laying by for a rainy day. They feel as anybody would feel when entering upon a period of comparative opulence after pinching, that they want to enjoy it.

Now, let me repeat, if this is possible in time of war it should be still more possible after the war. The fears have been proved groundless of those who insisted that the social legislation of the few years immediately preceding the war were laying too heavy a burden upon our resources and would drive capital abroad, etc. There is a limit to driving capital abroad. Capital is only stored-up wealth, or power over production; and wealth is produced from two things, labour and land. Unless we send old England itself abroad we shall not lose all our capital in any eventuality. What are we doing with it now? what have we been doing with it ever since this horrible strife began? In a few months we have flung away with both hands a hundred times the amount Mr. Lloyd George would have dared to ask for to put an end to destitution. It was there to throw away, and there is plenty still behind it. The war has not hit us yet as it has hit other nations; we scarcely know what it means as compared with any other belligerent. And the secret is that we are going on producing all the time. Our mills and factories are not idle; we are earning the wherewithal to exchange for the commodities necessary to feed and maintain our population at home and our armies

abroad—thanks to the Fleet. We are doing this while employing in productive occupations only a tithe of the number we should in time of peace; that minority, including many women, is providing what the rest of us live on and fight with. It must be so; where else could it come from? Wealth is not money: it is goods. Neutral nations do not maintain us out of charity; they supply what we want because we are able to pay for it by sending an equivalent in articles of value overseas. And if that can be done under such conditions as prevail to-day it could and should be done as a matter of duty and national well-being when all the workers are at work again and war's wastage has stopped. I will return to that point in a moment, for upon it everything else hangs: the whole question is just that of seeing that the workers *are* set to work again.

But to illustrate what I have been saying up to now. Here, let us suppose, are two families settled in a savage country far from civilisation. They earn their living by trapping and shooting animals, and curing and sending away for sale the furs thus obtained. The head of the one household claims all the territory as having been first there, and he employs his more lately arrived neighbour in his business and allows him a certain moiety of the proceeds. To every request by the man for more, the master replies that he cannot afford to give it. He will not even allow him plenty of ammunition wherewith to do some business on his own account. One day they are attacked by redskins, and both families are blockaded in the master's house. Week

after week goes by, and by economising their supplies and using their powder and shot effectively they manage to come through safely and defeat their assailants. Then the employee speaks up to his superior: "See here, are we going back to the old conditions? Before this murderous attack began you could not afford to give me anything extra either in means or profits. In the first half hour's fighting we blazed away more ammunition than I should have asked from you in a year; and you have maintained me and my children on the accumulated store of our joint labours in the past. Through dire necessity, and because we had to stick together or go under, you have distributed your substance freely. I did not know you had such a quantity by you; neither, perhaps, did you. None of us have starved or been anywhere near starving, and yet we have been fighting instead of toiling. Can't you be more generous when the toiling begins again without being afraid that you will not have enough left for yourself? Make me a partner; I will work all the better and produce all the more."

To make the parallel exact one only needs to suggest that the non-combatant members of that little garrison are able to do something to add to the stock of provisions while the siege lasts, and to keep the weapons up to the mark for their defenders. And here you have a faithful picture in little of what is taking place in this island at the present hour. The Germans have acted the part of redskins sure enough. In a suggestive article in the *Daily Chronicle* of January 18, Mr. H. G. Wells says: "Germany is

feeling the pinch of the war much more even than France, which is habitually parsimonious and instinctively cleverly economical, and Russia, which is hardy and insensitive. Great Britain has really only begun to feel the stress. She has probably suffered economically no more than have Holland or Switzerland. . . . She has not even looked yet at the German financial expedients of a year ago." There is no more clear-headed writer on economic subjects living to-day than Mr. Wells, and his words carry weight. It will be time enough to talk about this country being hard hit by the war when the cry of hunger begins to be heard as it already has been in other countries; but, please God, if we are wise it never will be heard here. It would be a tragedy, indeed, if we had to wait till after the war to hear it.

To get back to the problem of setting the worker to work. Do not let us make the mistake we were making before the war and shout our *non possumus* before we have even tried. Here are two propositions which I will challenge anybody to confute. First, every able-bodied man with two hands can be enabled to produce something of benefit to the community. Secondly, there is no such thing as over-production, though there may be over-proportional production. As regards the former of these twain I fall back on the old commonplace—and almost apologise for referring to it, it is so obvious—that it is not production that is the matter, but distribution. There would be no dire poverty but for the inequitable distribution of the means of life. Cure that, and you have cut at the root of most of our economic ills.

As a people we may be very poor for a good while after the war, but nobody need be destitute. We shall begin to build up again from the hour peace is declared. I remember hearing Mr. Sidney Webb say once that if all property were shared up equally to-morrow we might still have to call ourselves poor; there would not be enough to make us rich all round. "But," he added, "destitution is curable, and without long delay." That is it. Poverty does no one any harm though luxury easily may; I am not at all sure that civilisation would not be better in a hundred ways if it were poorer than it is—and it is likely to be poor enough after the war. But poverty with simplicity and clean living spells happiness; destitution spells misery and degradation.

John Stuart Mill pointed out about two generations ago that there may be real and acute distress in times of general prosperity owing to the shifting of markets or introduction of labour-saving appliances. And when that happens, he said, measures should be taken by the community as a whole to tide over the period of readjustment. Ought we not to be getting ready for that now by organising industry on a national basis without destroying individual enterprise? The community is all the richer by the number of commodities produced at any one time so long as we do not go short of others that are as necessary or more necessary. If three-fourths of the workers of the world suddenly took to producing boots and shoes it would not be true to say that we had too many boots and shoes; it would only mean that we should each have a new pair of boots as often

as we now have a clean pocket-handkerchief. But what would be disastrous would be to have three-fourths of the workers making boots and shoes if there were not sufficient left to grow corn. That is where gluts come from, and that is what wants regulating. Too many boots and shoes to enable those who make them to exchange their products for corn—a shortage of corn—hence hunger and unemployment.

With all our might let us join together to set all idle hands going after the war, and to see to it that none of such labour is misapplied or ill-requited. As Ruskin said in *Unto this Last:* "Luxury is indeed possible in the future—innocent and requisite; luxury for all, and by the help of all: but luxury at present can only be enjoyed by the ignorant; the cruelest man living could not sit at his feast, unless he sat blindfold. Raise the veil boldly; face the light; and if, as yet, the light of the eye can only be through tears, and the light of the body through sackcloth, go thou forth weeping, bearing precious seed, until the time come, and the kingdom, when Christ's gift of bread and bequest of peace shall be Unto this last as unto thee; and when, for earth's severed multitudes of the wicked and the weary, there shall be holier reconciliation than that of the narrow home, and calm economy, where the Wicked cease—not from trouble, but from troubling—and the Weary are at rest."

CHAPTER XX

WILL OUR CIVILISATION SURVIVE?

AMONGST those who deserve well of their country at the present time the name of Mr. Arthur Balfour stands out prominently. Not so prominently as it ought by a great deal. Here is a man who led the House of Commons for a longer continuous period than any statesman since Walpole, who has held with distinction the highest offices under the Crown, including the premiership itself, who had earned and entered upon a period of comparative leisure and cultured retirement, and yet in the nation's hour of need places his talent and experience ungrudgingly at the service of the Government of the day, and finally takes charge of one of the most difficult and responsible posts in the administration of an old political opponent, a younger man than himself. If this is not admirable I do not know what is. Amid all the bickering and intriguing that has been going on since the formation of the present ministry it never has occurred to any one to accuse Mr. Balfour of self-seeking or of being animated by any other motive than that of doing his best to strengthen Mr. Asquith's hands for Britain's sake. He might very well have expected the highest place in a Coalition Government considering his record, influence, and

ability. But, no, he takes what is given him, and is content to occupy a subordinate position at a table where for many years he has never sat except as chief. Mr. Churchill's withdrawal from the Admiralty created a situation of extreme difficulty and tension; Mr. Balfour calmly stepped into it although in his long career he had never been head of that department before, and the whole British public heaved a sigh of relief when it heard that he had done so; the crisis was past, our naval future was safe; we could get back to our wrangling again without any fear of alarming interruptions to our favourite pastime. And we have been at it ever since, hammer and tongs, pounding away at this man and praising that, pushing one up into public favour and pulling another down according to the prevailing mood of the moment, pressing new claims to the headship of a reconstituted Cabinet or repudiating them as the case may be. But no one has ever credited Mr. Balfour with taking part in these squabbles. He is there to help, not to hinder, and when he is no longer wanted he will go. We all know this, and are glad of it. Still, we might at least remember to say so sometimes.

But this is not what I set out to write just now. It only came up by association of ideas, so to speak. It was not Mr. Balfour the statesman I was thinking of primarily, but Mr. Balfour the philosopher and man of learning; and I could not help recalling our debt to the one while considering the other. I was pondering a suggestive remark he once made in an address before Cambridge University—the Henry Sidgwick

Memorial Lecture, I think it was. He said that we of the modern world were witnessing an entirely new thing in the story of human development. Hitherto within the period of recorded history one civilisation had followed another, each occupying its own special patch of the earth's surface, having its own distinctive characteristics, continuing for a certain definite period long or short, and then passing away to be replaced by another on different ground, the work of a different race, and with a different destiny. But now, he pointed out, for good or for ill we are evolving one vast, complex, world-wide civilisation, a civilisation which soon or late will gather all the peoples of the earth into its embrace. What then? Here is a new problem for mankind to solve. If this civilisation of ours perishes like the local ones of old, what is going to take its place? Where are we to look for the revivifying influence that, coming originally from new races, made good the failure of a worn-out ancient society?

This is an impressive generalisation proceeding from a master mind; and it is true to the facts as well as the question to which they give rise, a question with portentous implications at the present hour, when civilisation seems to be doing its utmost to destroy itself. I met Mr. Bernard Shaw in Oxford Street one day last summer, and he characteristically accosted me thus: "Well, what do you think of civilisation now? Don't you think we have had about enough of it? But, anyhow, it doesn't seem likely to last long; human beings at large are working hard to make an end of it, and the sooner the better, I

should say; it has been no great success. Our cussed race has gone mad and is committing suicide as fast as ever it can. It might be a mercy to shorten the process. You are holding Intercessory Services at the City Temple. I suggest that you ask Almighty God to throw humanity on the scrap heap." These were perhaps not the precise words in which Mr. Shaw thus pungently expressed himself; they may be less forceful; but they give the general sense of them, and I do not think he would object to my reproducing them here. Their cynicism is only apparent, and represents the disappointment of idealists in general with the course affairs have taken in these last days.

What is our civilisation intrinsically worth? What guarantee of permanency has it that its predecessors had not? It is a question worth looking into. What Mr. Balfour said about the civilisations of old is undeniable: they were all limited both as to race and to the territory occupied. I might add that they were limited in time succession also; as one rose another fell, as a new one came to the birth an older was overthrown or sank into decay. Thus we have the civilisation of China, no one knows how old, but very ancient, practically shut up to itself, possessing characteristic features which distinguish it from all others. It reaches a certain point and then it stops; as far as can be ascertained it has not made the slightest advance for ages. It is a case of arrested development, and unique at that. India has its own history not at all like China's. Long, long ago it topped a high point of excellence both

materially and intellectually. In certain ways that attainment has never been surpassed; but a blight fell on it; it became moribund. What we see in India to-day, with its teeming millions of population, is but the ghost of a departed glory, a mournful decadence in the quality of the inheritors of an immemorial tradition. Babylon, that great city of the plains and seat of one of the most formidable empires of the ancient world—itself a name that has survived into our own time as a symbol for soulless materialism and vicious abundance—going back to an antiquity as remote as 10,000 B.C. and producing a literature and science the very memory of which has been lost—what of Babylon to-day? Our troops advancing from the Persian Gulf are fighting over its ruins, and many of them, perhaps, do not even know it. The descendants of that imperial race of a long forgotten world have lost all sense of continuity and become merged in other and younger peoples. We do not know where to look for them nor how to trace a link between them and the folk who erected the colossal structures—monuments, elaborate plants for irrigation and the like—that lie strewn about the plains of Mesopotamia. The seal of death is over everything there. One of the richest districts in the world in natural resources, it is now one of the poorest in cultivation, its inhabitants half savages.

And so one might go on. Assyria, that land of fierce and ruthless warriors, the Prussia of three thousand years ago; Persia, with its mighty Cyrus, the Napoleon of his day; Egypt, that home of mystery and occult lore—what do we know about

them all? Kings, prophets, sages they produced, men of the sword and men of the mind, and passed; the very names of most of them were writ in water. There is good reason to believe that many of our scientific inventions were anticipated in the country of the Nile so far back that the secret of their use was lost again while Europe was still primeval forest, swamp, and waste. Each of these imposing despotisms had its own particular centre and its own specific period of prosperity, its own unique type of race culture, and then it perished. Egypt alone went on and on; there is a magic, a lure, an immortality about Egypt hard to describe; but the Egypt of to-day is not the Egypt of the Pharaohs. "From the summits of the Pyramids forty centuries look down upon you," grandiloquently cried Bonaparte to his soldiers. He might have said a hundred and not been far wrong, but only the shadow of that wondrous past remains, a shadow and a tomb.

Greece leaped upon the stage when Egypt was already hoary, broke Persia's dominion, and laid the foundations of modern culture and refinement of life. Alexander's armies penetrated the Orient, and proved themselves invincible against the barbarians of their own borders too. Where is that eager, bouyant Greek spirit now? Was not Byron right?—

> "The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
> Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
> Where grew the arts of war and peace,
> Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung!
> Eternal Summer gilds them yet,
> But all, except their sun, is set.

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear."

We owe to that amazing Greece of the comparatively brief classical age more than we can ever compute; but it is dead; it does not live in Constantine and the pusillanimous nation he rules. And here is a curious thing. The blind Homer, while the Greece we know was yet young, sang of an older and greater Greece, a Greece of doughty heroes and matchless splendours, a Greece of wealth and worth compared with which the Greece of his own day was rude and weak. We used to think this was a poet's imagination, and that there never was such a Greece. We were wrong. Archæological investigation has rediscovered it; the spade and mattock have dug it up, or enough of it to tell us what it must have been. Homer did not exaggerate. There it was, that Greece of dim legend and mythic story, the Greece of Agamemnon, Achilles, and Odysseus—there it really was. It has been so completely blotted out by some ethnic catastrophe, some unexplained descent of barbarian hordes as to leave no account of itself behind save the vague belief in a golden age to which the *Iliad* refers.

Then came Rome, mistress of the world, Rome the eternal as all men at one time believed. For a few generations civilisation lay under one sceptre and centred in one city. The proud boast—

> "While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
> When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
> And when Rome falls—the World,"

seemed safe enough when it was first uttered. The Emperors were entitled "lord of the world." So potent was the spell cast upon all minds by this greatest of human institutions—*Roma immortalis*—that for centuries after the empire was dead nobody knew it, and people everywhere went on talking as if it were alive. New nations grew up inside it, and the proudest title their rulers could take was that of the old Roman Cæsar. That is all "Kaiser" means, or "Czar" either. Every "emperor" is but a projection of the old Roman "Imperator," who was only general of the armies of a Republic. This is one of the little ironies of history. Rome itself is gone for ever, the Rome whose sway stretched from Spain to India, and Scotland to the Sahara. It collapsed from within before it was overthrown from without.

Why then should we assume, as we almost universally do, that our particular civilisation will last for ever—or, rather, as the Roman thought of the Coliseum, until the end of the world? It might very well be that we should sink back into barbarism either as a result of the present contest or from other causes. Such has happened before. When Roman civilisation fell the clock was put back for no less than a thousand years. The time was not all wasted; paganism had to perish that something new and better, something richer and more stable, might gradually rise upon its ruins. But one can quite understand the pessimism and melancholy of the finer minds of antiquity when

they saw all that was dignified and beautiful being swept under by anarchy and savagery. I have always felt a great sympathy for Julian the apostate, the emperor who strove so vainly to resist the triumphant advance of Christianity. To him the new cult seemed rude, vulgar, ugly, and irrational compared with the venerable and dignified symbolism of the old Greek Pantheon it was driving out. And so it was—at the time. It has since gathered to itself much of the poetry and refinement of the less morally exalted faiths it destroyed. What poor Julian and others who felt like him did not see was that it possessed a principle of vitality and creative energy they did not.

Has that principle still power enough to regenerate the world? We shall see. For the old, old alternative is before us: either up or down, there can be no standing still. It rests with ourselves to say which it shall be. I do not myself believe, and never could bring myself to believe, that the whole human family could fail the purpose of Almighty God and drop down into the Tophet of sheer jungle animalism. But we are in danger of it: that is the point. It is, to say the least of it, conceivable that our present civilisation, which has been so largely materialistic in spirit and aim, may go to pieces, and something entirely new have to replace it, and that might take a long, long while. As it is, we have been pulled up sharply, and will have to look to our foundations. Will we come out of the war chastened and purified, or will the various belligerents be like the famous Kilkenny cats who fought each other tooth and claw

till at length there was nothing left but their tails? What kind of a world will it be after the nations have stopped killing each other and begun to live again? I ask very seriously, Can it be hoped for that we may deliberately set ourselves to create a higher and better type of civilisation, albeit a simpler and sweeter one, than that which we are breaking up? Perhaps; it depends mainly upon whether Germany can be compelled to learn the lesson properly. We are seeing over again the fighting out of an issue upon which hangs the future of all mankind. Ages ago that issue was between Carthage and Rome; to-day it is between Great Britain and Germany. Had the mighty Hannibal and his Punic warriors prevailed, a crueler, more sinister, more merciless military despotism would have controlled the fortunes of civilisation than what actually did prevail. Democracy would have been snowed under in its first faint attempts to assert itself, and there never would have been an England or a United States of America. Rome or Carthage, England or Prussia—which as a spiritual ideal? We have all heard of the famous Roman senator who never finished a speech, no matter what the subject, without adding as his final word: "I am also of opinion that Carthage should be destroyed." It is not Germany we want to destroy but Prussianism, Kaiserism, with its blood-drinking worship of the old pagan god Thor, upon whom it has stuck a Christian name.

And then? Well, then let us begin again and make a better thing of life than we have been doing. That ripe and rich civilisation which immediately preceded

ours and had to die that ours might be born might look a finer thing than what followed it for many hundreds of years, but it was not. Its gaze was fixed on secular ideals and those only; and the civilisation that does that is doomed. Cicero was a cultivated gentleman who wrote with much complacency and eloquence concerning man's earthly lot, and very vaguely concerning the mysterious beyond. Francis, the little poor man of Assisi, hundreds of years afterwards taught everybody he met to regard earthly possessions as nothing and the soul as everything. If Francis were invited to the Lord Mayor's banquet to-day, and behaved as in his own day, we should not know what to make of him. He would take a big pepperbox full of ashes in his pocket, and sprinkle it over the turtle soup and any other dish they might set before him, saying as he did so, "Brother ash is pure." He would not stay away from the feast, nor rebuke any one else for eating their fill; he would enjoy their company, and greet all and sundry with the humble, charming, childlike courtesy characteristic of him. But he did not believe in glutting his appetites; metaphorically speaking, he sprinkled ashes over everything that the flesh took pleasure in. And he lived in heaven always. Hitherto the twentieth century has been with Cicero. God grant the rest of it may be with Francis. Cicero's world was startlingly like ours, much more so than any of the centuries that lie between. It had much the same kind of mentality and very similar problems. Unquestionably the ordinary man of to-day, whether educated or not, would feel himself more at home

with the mind of that old world of long ago than with that of the people of the Middle Ages. We could converse with Cicero much more easily than with St. Francis; we should understand him better; he would be more our kind of man. I am sorry to have to admit it, but it is so. Cicero's utter secularity of outlook and uncertainty about the future life represents fairly well the average mind of to-day, whereas Francis is a stranger to it. We may rhapsodise about the latter, but we do not get anywhere near him; we should probably shut him up in a lunatic asylum if he were going about among us just now as he did among his thirteenth-century contemporaries. Brave, mysterious, mystical Russia would be much more likely to take him to her heart. Oh, I wonder—I wonder greatly—whether the world after the war will have sense enough to shake off most of its painfully acquired secular wisdom, with all its direful train of results, and go as healthfully mad again as the primitive Christians and the thirteenth-century friars—I wonder and I long.

CHAPTER XXI

DEMOCRACY AND AUTOCRACY CONTRASTED. IS THE FORMER LESS EFFICIENT?

It is often and quite truly said that the present war is largely a war of ideals, and that the cause of the Allies is the cause of democracy against autocracy, of liberty against bondage, of the reign of reasonableness and good will against bullying and brute force. With certain allowances this statement is unimpeachable. The war is indeed a war of ideals; it would be wholly dreadful if the world were to be governed by the Prussian jackboot system; it is not too much to say that the victory of Germany would really mean the victory of materialism in thought and practice. On this side of the question the mysticism of Russia, as Stephen Graham has been showing us, is in more pronounced antagonism to the German spirit than is that of either England or France. But on the other side has to be set the fact that Russia is as much an autocracy as Germany, though without Germany's scientific efficiency, and as much opposed to popular government in every shape and form. Nevertheless with Russia on our side the triumph of our united arms will ultimately mean the triumph of the democratic principle, of the sovereignty of the people, over that of irresponsible monarchical rule.

This is almost inevitable; whereas if we lose, the anti-popular elements in the internal administration of the nations of Europe will be more deeply rooted than before. Of course we shall not lose, but we need to win very definitely and drastically to break the accursed alliance between imperialism and militarism which has held mankind in dread for so long.

> "Before the face of God we swear:
> As life is good and sweet,
> Under the sun
> This horror shall not come again;
> Never, never again
> Shall twenty million men,
> Nor twenty, no, nor ten,
> Leave all God gave them in the hands of one—
> Leave the decision over peace and war
> To king or kaiser, president or tsar."[1]

I thank the American who wrote those lines. He knows what is essentially at stake.

But this raises a nice point: So far, has the hour of trial shown that democracy is as advantageous as autocracy in the regulation of human affairs? Was it so before the war, and has it proved itself to be so in the war? Is democracy as a form of government, as a spirit or temper dominating our social arrangements, worth conserving? Is it worth fighting and dying for? Here is a moot subject for inquiry.

Let us be sure of what we mean by democracy. In Lincoln's famous words, it is the government of the people by the people and for the people; but even so it may take many forms. Aristotle would not have believed it realisable in anything except

a city state, a state of perhaps no more than thirty thousand citizens. He would have scouted the idea of a democracy that ran to a hundred millions as in the United States of America. And to him and his contemporaries citizenship, democratic or otherwise, involved the subjection of a helot class of three or four times the number, who were compelled to do all the drudgery for the privileged citizens; he held that a man could not be a proper citizen and have to wait on himself. I wonder what our Labour M.P.'s would think about that. It is clear that these city states of old were not democratic at all in our sense of the word, but oligarchies.

Our own ancient Anglo-Saxon tribes when they originally came to these shores were small democracies. The folk-moot was the assembly of all the freemen in council, the men able to bear arms. There were grades of rank, but all had a voice in the direction of communal affairs. Serfdom developed later, but even then the mediæval manor was a curious anticipation of modern communism in certain ways. It was a self-sufficing economic unit in which the agricultural lands were carefully divided up among the households to be maintained, and divided in such a way that no one held any strip in perpetuity; the holdings changed hands from year to year on a recognised system, so that the best and richest soils came into the possession of each family in turn. And every member of the little community, even the widow and the orphan, had a universally admitted right to a fair share of the produce of the harvest. There were bad years, years

of famine and flood, but when they came all suffered together. This system had to break up in time to make way for a larger unity, but it seems a pity we could not get it back in some of its best features. It was social democracy in small.

It was a long time before anything like a national consciousness appeared, and longer still before the democratic spirit extended to it. Our ancestors lost the battle of Hastings and had to submit to a foreign prince at the head of a comparatively small invading army because the men of the midlands and the north could not grasp the fact that what happened to London and the south had anything to do with them; in fact this inability to think and act as a united whole has always been characteristic of our race and is to-day. When centralised government became established under kingly rule it interfered very little at first with local customs and methods. The one thing the English people would not stand was direct taxation. We have to stand it now with a vengeance. Nor did the central government consider that it was its function to see justice done as between man and man or even to keep the peace. It allowed private warfare to go on, and within limits it assumed that every individual must see to the avenging of his own wrongs; all the State did was to keep the ring, as it were, and see fair play. When at length it interfered more in local matters and was strong enough to insist on maintaining order and the obligation resting equally upon all individuals to obey the law, the question at once arose how the local voice was to make itself heard in the councils

of the sovereign and his ministers. Obviously the nation was too big a unit to permit of all the freemen travelling to one central spot and taking an immediate part in the general deliberations of the legislative authority. So the device of representation was hit upon, and it is an odd thing to note in these days that for generations the chief difficulty was to get the various localities to send representatives at all.

Yet so modern democracy grew, for it should be observed that it is from our English institutions far more than from any other source that popular government throughout the world has sprung. Rather more than a dozen years ago, when on a visit to the United States, I went to see Mr. Roosevelt at his home in Oyster Bay, and in the course of conversation he pointed out a fact that I have never since lost sight of. It was this: he said that American democracy owed its origin to two main forces, that of English Puritanism and that of the French essayists of the eighteenth century, Rousseau and his kind, who made the way for the great Revolution which shook human society to its foundations and culminated for a while in the military despotism of Napoleon. "But of the two," continued Mr. Roosevelt, "we owe far more to the English pietists than to the French idealists." I should say myself that wherever you see real parliamentary institutions at work on the earth to-day, coupled with the responsibility of the administration to the people, you see the old English folk-moot enlarged and extended to meet modern conditions. This is its genesis, this is the historic root from which it grew.

In a terrible world-struggle like the present, democracy is at a great disadvantage compared with autocracy. It cannot easily maintain the secrecy essential to vigorous and decided action, diplomatic or military; it would be against its principles to suppress the liberty of the subject as drastically as is now being done in enemy countries. One of our most cherished possessions is liberty of speech, and another is the right of an accused person to a fair trial. If either of these are suspended it can only be under protest and within as small limits as possible; the German bureau knows nothing of such limits. Then we are apt to be insubordinate, ill-disciplined, ineffective in our methods of organising our resources; it is part of the price we have to pay for the individual freedom of initiative, and still more freedom of inertia, to which we have been so long accustomed. Suppose our Government had proclaimed universal service the day war broke out—which, as we have seen, is involved in the very idea of Anglo-Saxon democracy and is no innovation—we should have been saved a world of trouble since. But it was not done, for the simple reason that the step seemed too drastic to take without the direct authority of Parliament, and that meant interminable talk and discussion and more or less division of purpose. Germany was not hampered so and never would be, hence the German people cannot understand us and our ways, and mistakenly think that objection to compulsion on the part of persons in this country means that we are half-hearted about the war. Democracy in America is perhaps in worse case, for it has developed a boss

control of politics which is anything but democratic in essence, and it is more subject to corruption and bribery than with us. But these things, be it remembered, are apt in some degree to threaten popular government anywhere; they can only threaten autocracy if the fountain-head is itself corrupt. It has been said, and there is some truth in it, that the best form of government for mankind would be a benevolent autocracy if we have regard to no more than the immediate happiness of the governed. Find your benevolent autocrat, endow him with all the wisdom and ability of the ripest statesmanship and the unselfishness of an angel from heaven, give him unlimited scope for a few years, and then shoot him. For undoubtedly, as the late Mr. Gladstone warned us, the possession of practically unlimited political power always tends to demoralise. The Kaiser's megalomania is a good illustration of this, and so at the other extreme are some of the fractious strikes among the workers in this country since the war began. Democracy is always handicapped by the fact that although in theory it affords opportunity for the State to discover and use its best talent in the public service, in practice it tends to lower the tone of public life through the necessity under which politicians labour of conciliating an electorate which contains a large proportion of stupid people.

But if our thought is fixed on something greater than mere immediate satisfaction, if we consider the training of manhood as the object of government, then democracy, with all its drawbacks, is preferable to the best autocracy imaginable. For there is

nothing that evolves faculty and strengthens character so much as a sense of responsibility, and democracy encourages that. When sovereignty resides in the people as a whole, and not in an individual or a group, it must mean that each man is correspondingly dignified by the knowledge that he is in some degree arbiter of the destinies of all. By the law of gravitation the earth draws the sun as well as the sun the earth, and therefore every tiniest pebble on the earth's surface in proportion to its mass is exercising control upon the movements of the sun; so does every citizen exercise sovereignty in a democratic state, and the knowledge that he possesses such sovereignty should tend, on the whole, to develop a loftier type of character than if it were wanting. Men have to learn how to use liberty. Those new to it mostly tend to confound it with licence, whereas it is just the opposite. Freedom is not caprice but self-development in society. "I believe," said the Irishman, "that every man should do as he likes, and if a man won't do as he likes he should be made to." Some people's notions of freedom get no farther than that. Freedom to obey the law of one's own being is not and cannot be inconsistent with the well-being of society at large; for what we individually are we owe to society in great measure, greater probably than we ever stop to appraise. A man brought up apart from ordered human society, even if he could survive, would be little better than a wild beast; his faculties would be utterly undeveloped except those that were purely animal. Self-realisation is only possible within society, and therefore our

individual liberty, to be worthy of the name, must never be incompatible with the liberties of others, or with the good of the society of which we are individually members. As I have more than once remarked, perfect anarchy and perfect socialism are one and the same, and both represent the Christian ideal in human relations: it is the service which is perfect freedom. We are members one of another, and cannot attain to our full individual heritage apart from the whole.

There is nothing the youth of our nation needs so much as discipline, and I hope the democracy of the future will see that it gets it. Perhaps from this point of view universal military service would not be such a bad thing, for at least it would train the rising generation in habits of obedience and esprit de corps which at present it sadly lacks. Democratise the service sufficiently and there would be few dangers attending it; we should not have to fear the dominance of a military caste. And if all civilised states became democracies there would be little likelihood of our having to fear any more wars. Democracies don't want wars; they know too well who have to do the fighting.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SUPERNATURAL ORDER

THE Bishop of London is reported to have said recently that he knew of many cases in which people had lost their faith in God and the goodness of life through the horrors of the world war. That may well be; I know of a few myself. But I doubt very much whether such faith was ever strong or well grounded. I may be mistaken, and am far from feeling uncharitable in saying this, but so far as my experience goes I am inclined to believe that a good deal of the so-called loss of faith is somewhat fictitious. People who have not been in the habit of paying much attention to spiritual things have suddenly discovered that their conventional religion has failed them in presence of the appalling catastrophe which has overwhelmed civilisation; and is it any wonder? So much of our religion is wholly unreal, a mere veneer of unreflective belief and observance upon a thoroughly worldly and selfish mode of life. Something was needed to break that up, and it has come with terrific force. And, let me add, I have come across cases of late in which not even the excuse of conventionality can be pleaded. Persons who have been frankly irreligious in practice, caring nothing about either God or heaven, and very little

about anything but their own gratification, are now loud in their protests against belief in the divine government of the universe. Omnipotent goodness, they avow, would not have permitted the present orgy of strife and slaughter. That is as it may be, but a judgment proceeding from such a source does not carry much weight. What does and should carry weight is the conviction of those who have hitherto done their best to live in terms of the highest that has been revealed to mankind, and we all know what that is whether we obey it or not. I have yet to be told of a single instance in which a man or woman of lofty Christian character has been deprived of all consolation, robbed of all hope and trust, by the advent of the universal calamity from which we are suffering. The very fact that they could be would be a sufficient demonstration that they had been looking for their good in the wrong place.

But at the same time one does not forget that there are those everywhere about us who are in deepest sorrow and affliction, because of what is happening, and they include some of the noblest and worthiest of our fellow-creatures. What comfort is there for them, and how are they to find it? I write with deep respect, not only to the mourners and the broken in heart, to whom the war has brought personal loss and trouble for which there can never be any earthly compensation, but to those whose idealism has received a shock, who have been rudely awakened from dreams of a better and happier state of human society in this world to a bitter realisation of the truth that the forces of evil in human nature

itself are still too mighty to permit of such a prospect for ages to come. Alas, for the castles we have builded, the many fair hopes we have indulged of social and individual felicity and abounding gladness! They have all been drowned in a torrent of blood.

I am not going to try to reconcile divine goodness with the permission of human suffering. There is much that might be said on that point, but when we have said it all there still remains something unexplained, something for which no argument drawn from the stores of human wisdom will suffice. Let us look to comfort only, for it can be gained, without doubt.

In the first place, let us try to grasp the fact of the supernatural order. Few people ever do that, with the consequence that we are more or less the victims of the fluctuations and accidents of sense. We attribute (in a wrong way) far too much importance to the natural order, as it is called, the plane of physical experience and all that depends upon it. But there is another order, a world invisible yet not far away, with values of its own quite distinct from those of the world we know so well, an order in which things are exactly what they seem, and where is no lack, no loss, no imperfection, but everything stands in its due relation to everything else and all is harmony and bliss. That order is the real, and ours—if it be right to call this ours any more than the other—is the comparatively unreal. Remember, I am talking about a simple fact, a fact as solid and substantial as Europe or America. The modern mind has largely lost sight of this supernatural order,

and yet it interpenetrates the natural order and is influencing it all the time; in fact the natural order is a sort of broken reflection of the supernatural. Plato used to say that everything earthly was a type or image of something that existed ideally in heaven. We may call the supernatural order heaven if we like, provided we are careful to recognise that it is the real, the eternal, the all-complete of which this earth-world is but the shadow. The relation between the two is like that between a beautiful landscape and its blurred image in a lake. Every ripple on the surface of the lake disturbs and distorts the picture of the calm serenity above, though it is closely related to it and affords us fleeting glimpses of what the higher must be. Think of this. There *is* a supernatural order, and it is the source of all our idealism, all our notions of goodness, truth, and happiness. Try to imagine a world in which nothing needs to be improved upon because everything is already exactly what it should be, a world in which nothing ever goes wrong, and from which nothing is missing that is needed for the good of its inhabitants and the satisfaction of their desires, a world in which by just being themselves people are giving and doing their best for one another, and you have the supernatural order. I repeat that it exists now and has always existed; it does not need to be made; from all eternity it is.

Its values, as I have just indicated, are not like ours, though not totally unlike either. Here in the flesh we are deceived by appearances. A scoundrel like King Ferdinand of Bulgaria can make high-

sounding professions of fidelity and honour, and these are accepted at their face value by the Germans on whose side he is fighting; though if there be a black-hearted rascal in existence I should think it is he. But we are seldom, if ever, quite sure of motives in one another's actions, or even in our own; there is a lot of specious humbug in every grade of society; human nature is given to pretending and being deceived. Again, we suppose the possession of external abundance to be desirable as well as power over our fellows, and these are objects we contend about and kill one another for. In other words, the world, the flesh, and the devil can supply incentives and to a large extent control human action; they create values which we know are not the highest. But in the supernatural order it is different. There what we are is all we have, and there is perfect correspondence between the inner and the outer, between being and seeming. As Southey has it—

"They sin who tell us Love can die;
With earth all other passions fly,
All others are but vanity.
In heaven ambition cannot dwell,
Nor avarice in the vaults of hell;
Earthly, these passions of the earth,
They perish where they had their birth.
But Love is indestructible;
Its holy flame for ever burneth;
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times opprest,
It here is tried and purified,
Then hath in heaven its perfect rest.
It soweth here with toil and care;
But the harvest time of Love is there."

Would it not be delightful if we could get rid of all false values at a stroke and live for truth and goodness alone? To do that is to live in the supernatural order, the spiritual order, and in so far as we even try to do it we are living in and by that order now, and will wake up to it by and by when we pass through the gates of death.

Let me be careful here not to mislead any one into the heresy of supposing that the natural order is the seat of evil and the supernatural that of good. It is not so. And our hope is that one day the lower will be so entirely conformed to the higher, earth be so invaded and possessed by heaven, that all our troubles will disappear. That will be the fulfilment of the petition in the Lord's Prayer: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. All I am insisting upon at the moment is the reality of the supernatural order. We ought to be consciously and consistently living in it and for it.

And then what follows? Why, this: In perfect being is all having. That sounds a strange phrase, but I do not know what to substitute for it. I mean that when we are what we ought to be we shall, in virtue of that very fact, come into possession of everything we ought to have. Not in this world probably. Here in the natural order—disorder would be a better name for it—the noblest are as liable to pain and loss as the rest of mankind. Belgian nuns were violated, priests were shot for carrying letters from dying men to their relatives, heroic and self-sacrificing men and women lost every stick and stone of their possessions and were driven home-

less out into the world. I am daily in receipt of the most pathetic communications from English mothers who wonder if I could help them to find out anything about their boys at the front who have not been heard of for a considerable time. Nothing more moving has ever come my way than some of the descriptions these good women give of their lost ones. One can see how beautiful they were in their eyes, and how fine in character too. "Heaven without him would be no heaven to me," is a not infrequent observation of mother or wife, and I can well believe it. Consider all the sorrow thus pitifully expressed or held in check by hope and longing. If I had no word for such as these I think I would never dare speak in public or to write again. But here is the word, and it is not mine only; it is the promise of Him in whom the supernatural order became vocal once for all. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." What is yours you shall have, and you shall have it all. You shall have it because you have the capacity for it and not otherwise; you shall have it because of what you are. We have to get up to the highest level on which to possess, and then—it is the law of the supernatural order—we possess in a perfection of which nothing can ever rob us. We learn, as Whittier says—

> "The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
> That life is ever lord of death,
> And love can never lose its own."

Or as John Burroughs puts it in the simple little poem he entitles "Waiting"—

"Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
I rave no more 'gainst Time or Fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.
I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face."

If you love with a pure, unselfish love; or if you are living, not simply for the amount of wealth you can heap together, or the amount of sensuous pleasure you can wring out of existence, or for any of the other things that the world counts desirable, but for exalted spiritual ideals; in other words, if you are living for the values of the supernatural order, you can no more be kept out of your heritage than the summer could be stopped from coming by Act of Parliament. Wait in quietness and confidence, and you will see. The span of human life is not long at the longest.

Moreover, you can know this as you go along. One of the most wonderful things in life is the way in which comfort comes to the heart that is stayed upon the highest. Despair and unselfishness are mutually incompatible. Viewing a disaster beforehand you may say you could not bear it, that nothing would be left for you but absolute, unrelieved blackness of misery if it befell; but when it actually comes, dreadful as it may seem and terribly as it may hurt, if you have been trying to meet it on the very highest level of courage and faith, something—call it by what name you like—presently invades your soul and gives you peace and assurance of coming good. 'Tis a miracle, but true. And almost always a surprise.

CHAPTER XXIII

KING OF ENGLAND

A FEW weeks after the war broke out I happened to be in a certain London club and was shown one of the club curios, a book in which bets were registered between members, dating back to early Georgian times and containing the names of not a few men famous in our island story. But what struck me most in looking through that book was an entry only a few days old. It ran somewhat as follows: "Mr. so-and-so bets Lord somebody else (I don't remember what amount) that as a consequence of the present war there will not be a crowned head left in Europe twenty years hence except the King of England." This was an arresting sentence, not because of the bet—gambling is one of the greatest evils of the age—but because of the significance of the assumption made by both parties to the wager. The peer evidently doubted the disappearance of reigning royalty; the commoner was sure of it; but both agreed, so I was given to understand, that in any eventuality British monarchy would survive. All other thrones may be overturned, but that of England stands for ever. It will be interesting to see the result of that bet if we live long enough.

But why this confidence in the stability of our

monarchical institutions as contrasted with those of any other country? Well, the difference mainly resides in the quality of English kingship; there is no other quite like it, and most others are very unlike it. In a memorable speech some years back, Mr. Churchill spoke of our British royal house as the most ancient, the most glorious, and the most securely rooted in the affections of the people of any in the world. There was not another, he declared, that would not be proud to aspire to an alliance with it. Just so: English monarchy was venerable ages before that of Prussia existed. When the greater part of Europe was comprehended within the bounds of the mediæval Roman empire, England stood apart and independent with its own race of kings. The blood of Alfred flows in the veins of George V; I could trace the descent myself at a moment's notice; it has never been interrupted, notwithstanding the changes from one branch of royalty to another at successive crises in the history of the crown. The Hohenzollerns are of yesterday, and act like it; they have all the characteristics of the parvenu. Even the Hapsburgs, a far older and more illustrious stock, are hundreds of years junior—as sceptred sovereigns—to the royalty of England. The dukedom of Austria was a small affair compared with the dominions of our Richard the lion-hearted at the time of the third crusade, though every schoolboy knows of the treacherous manner in which duke dared to lay violent hands upon king and put him in ward till his English subjects ransomed him. Why, even then English monarchy was between three and

four hundred years old—I mean the monarchy of *England* as contrasted with the tiny county kingdoms of which it was formerly made up. Its Anglo-Saxon rulers, as their coinage shows, often called themselves "Basileus" in imitation of the style of the Eastern emperors, and no doubt as a reminder to the German descendants of Charlemagne in the West that they considered themselves of more ancient lineage than these, and owed no allegiance to the pseudo-Roman empire—and which was not Roman at all, but Teuton—which Charlemagne had professed to revive. The gimcrack Austrian empire of to-day is what remains of this Roman empire of the West of long ago, and when the ancestor of the present Francis Joseph resigned his crown to Napoleon in 1806 after the battle of Austerlitz he actually forgot who he was supposed to be, head of the Holy Roman empire, and described himself as—well—what Francis Joseph is content to be now. But the monarchy of England which overthrew Napoleon a few years later at Waterloo was the same monarchy that it had been without a break for over a thousand years, and its princes were, as they still are, scions of the same stock, the pedigree full and complete, that had filled the throne of England from the days of Egbert, save for such few interludes as those of Harold, William the Conqueror, and Cromwell, the old royal race going on all the time and resuming possession after every such hiatus. With a record like that, are we likely to be in a hurry to change or to pay much respect to the mushroom kings and emperors of the Continent?

There are peculiar features in this monarchy of

ours too. No other race has them. Our very word "king" is the old Anglo-Saxon "cyning," at once son and head of the "kin" or family or folk. We are the folk, and our kingship is the centre and symbol of our national unity. King does not mean ruler with us. The Latin "Rex" means that, and that is what sovereignty usually means; it is what "Kaiser" means as all the world only too sadly knows. But our king is simply the head of the folk, the centre of the family, the people of one blood and speech. He is a freeman among freemen, and loyalty to the throne means loyalty to home and all that the word stands for. The territorial title is of later date than the kingship itself. Not "king of England," but "king of the English" is the older and truer designation. "King of the British race at home and beyond the seas" would accurately describe King George's position to-day, to-day of all days when the men of the folk are hurrying from the ends of the earth to draw their sword for the motherland and the brood she bore. Great Britain and Greater Britain throughout the world represent a democratic ideal as old as our race itself. We could not be made into anything like what Germany is, for we have never been that in our whole history; it is foreign to our genius as a people. The difference is observable as far back as the days when the forbears of both races were savages pure and simple. The Anglo-Saxon lived along the foreshores of the North Sea; the High German, as he is usually called, dwelt in the forests of the Fatherland. The Anglo-Saxon never could be disciplined; the High German could and can.

The Anglo-Saxon moved in groups and units, the High German in platoons. The former had the defects of his qualities; he trusted little to organisation and much to individual initiative; adventure was in his blood and the sea his natural element. He began his career in history as a pirate, but soon outgrew it; the German, on the other hand, is clumsily and brutally beginning it. Is it not curious, this ages-long distinctiveness in the characteristics of the two peoples? And it is because ours are what they are, and always have been, that English kingship is what it is. It is we who have taught democracy to mankind, and it is no exaggeration to say that at this moment the only true democracies on the face of the globe are those of the English-speaking race. The British Islands are a republic with an hereditary chief magistrate, our king, and that is the secret both of the stability of our institutions and of the fact that we have more individual liberty than any other state in the world except those to which ours has given birth. And ours is a republic which we don't want altered in the sense of having an elected President; we are better as we are. There are no republicans in this country—theoretical ones I mean—for the simple reason that England as England began a republic and will continue a republic to the end, with one princely family in the highest place of honour. There used to be republicans, aggressive ones, in the years immediately preceding the accession of Queen Victoria, and these only existed because the crown had ceased to command respect owing to the moral deficiencies of those who wore it; there

have been none since, and are never likely to be again, for our present king and queen take the highest view of their duties and responsibilities and have set a standard in this respect from which it will be difficult if not impossible to decline. The gibe of the earlier years of the nineteenth century has lost its point—

> "George the first a fool was reckoned,
> A greater still was George the second;
> But of the three, so I have heard,
> The greatest fool was George the third.
> When George the fourth to hell descended,
> Thanks be to God the Georges ended."

Incidentally it may be remarked that our English word "queen" only means wife or mother, the first wife, the highest mother of the folk. And surely Queen Mary is exactly that. It is not as the foremost lady in the land that we think of her primarily, though she is that in virtue of her exalted station, but as the wife and mother to whose example all British wives and mothers may safely look. Thank heaven, it is not as a leader of society or of fashion in dress that she wields her principal influence, but as what her regal designation historically imports, "quen" or queen of the family, the household, the kin, the world-spread folk of our name and race.

And how many people know that English kingship is not strictly hereditary but elective? We need not even choose our king from the royal line. Once at least our fathers chose a simple eorl or thegn from amongst the nobility, if that be the word to use. We have never had a "noblesse" in England as on the

Continent, a privileged order absolutely separate from the commonalty, and we may be thankful for that too. Harold was chosen king because we needed a strong man to resist foreign invasion. Again and again we have set aside the eldest son of the reigning or deposed monarch—for we have not hesitated to depose our kings on occasion—and turned to a younger branch of the family. If hereditary right were strictly adhered to I suppose that delectable person Rupprecht of Bavaria, one of the most vicious haters of everything English, fighting against us at the present time, ought to be allowed to displace King George. It is absolutely funny to think that a Jacobite society still exists in England, and religiously decorated the statue of Charles I on the 30th of January, the anniversary of that unfortunate prince's execution, which if logical consistency means anything would like to send our reigning family packing and crown Rupprecht in Westminster Abbey with the Kaiser assisting! No, thanks; the wildest legitimist would draw the line at that, I should imagine. Our present king reigns by popular consent and not otherwise; and what else does President Wilson do? There is an element in the coronation ceremony at Westminster which is a reminder of this. I mean the point at which the appeal is made to the people to say whether they accept the newly consecrated prince for their king, and they reply by acclamation.

Another thing I might mention at this point is that there is a certain sense in which our king is a priest. He is solemnly appointed to his high office

by a sacramental act in recognition of the spiritual quality of the functions he has to discharge. He is literally "the Lord's anointed." He is as truly a chosen minister of Christ as any man dedicated to the service of the altar. Thus in a very real sense he does reign *jure divino*, and I should be sorry to think he did not. It would be a bad thing for England and the world if the crown as the centre of our national life were regarded as having no direct relation to Almighty God. As Shakespeare has it in *Richard II*—

> "Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm from an anointed king:
> The breath of worldly men cannot depose
> The deputy elected by the Lord."

Where does Scotland come in?—some one may ask. Where does Scotland not come in? I should like to know. A complacently ignorant English female exasperated me once by remarking that she could not see why Ireland should not accept our sovereigns as submissively as Scotland had done. "It was the other way about; you accepted Scotland's," I replied. But she shook her head with a superior smile as of one who knew; it made me want to throw a book at her. And yet in a way she was right. That shrewd old schemer, Henry VII, knew what he was about when he married his daughter to the Scottish king. Courtiers remonstrated that it might result in a Scottish dynasty coming to occupy the English throne. "The stronger will draw the weaker," said Henry; and so it has proved.

It is said that there are more Scotsmen to-day in London than in Edinburgh, so perhaps there is some force in the sly taunt often levelled at them, that Scotland is the finest country in the world to live out of, judging by the way its sons praise it and come south to push their fortunes. Anyhow, that royal marriage united the two countries and also forged another link with our ancient Anglo-Saxon royal house which had married into that of Scotland.

It gave us the Stuarts, too, that most romantic and unfortunate of royal races. And here let me conclude with a fact to which reference is scarcely ever made. The last representative of the Stuarts in the direct line, Henry Cardinal of York, lived till some years after the battle of Waterloo in receipt of a pension of £2000 a year from the British Government. He was the brother of Bonnie Prince Charlie. And in St. Peter's at Rome to-day the interested traveller may notice a tablet inscribed to the memory of British princes not named as such in our history school books—" James the Third, Charles the Third, and Henry the Ninth, kings of England."

CHAPTER XXIV

GERMAN COMFORT: TWO GREAT MEN CONTRASTED

THE grand old man of science in Germany is Professor Haeckel, and he has many admirers in this country and throughout the world notwithstanding the war. It is impossible to withhold a tribute of respect from the vigorous worker, well over eighty years of age, who has just issued one more book on the fundamental themes which occupy all minds—namely life, death, and religion. We also had a grand old man of science till the other day—Alfred Russel Wallace. He lived to be ninety, and retained his mental fecundity and alertness to the end. His name takes us back a long way too. He was one of the greatest figures of the nineteenth century, contemporary with Darwin and co-discoverer with him of the theory of Natural Selection, otherwise the doctrine of evolution, with which Darwin's name will be specially associated for all time to come. Do my younger readers realise what an epoch-making event the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* was? It revolutionised the mental outlook of the entire civilised world. It is not too much to say that it had far more effect upon religious thought, for instance, than Galileo's famous discovery (or re-discovery) of the fact that the earth is a satellite of the

sun instead of the other way round. What a hubbub there was, to be sure !—I mean about Darwin's book and its implications. Fierce conflict at once began and went on for many years between the champions of orthodox religion and the aggressive pioneers of the new scientific view of the universe and its history. Thousands of pulpits thundered against Darwin and his conclusions. The preachers and theologians could not treat him as the Roman Inquisitors treated Galileo, but if he had been the devil himself they could not have cursed him more thoroughly. And now this period of controversy is all but forgotten; it seems to us who read about it to belong to some remote age. Religion, like everything else, has adjusted itself to the new conditions, finding they were not so very dreadful, after all. Everybody believes in evolution more or less without necessarily disbelieving in the supernatural and divine. And only to think !—the man who to a great extent was the cause of this upheaval in ideas was still living and active among us till just before the war. Wallace did one of the finest and most generous things ever known in the history of new discoveries. He withheld his own treatise (which would otherwise have appeared simultaneously with Darwin's) from the public on the ground that Darwin deserved the full credit for the results attained owing to the greater thoroughness of his research work. Wallace had arrived at the same results independently.

But I am digressing. What I really wanted to point out was that the greatest forward leap of science in the Victorian age was due not to Germans

but to Britons. Darwin and Wallace made Haeckel possible. It is worth while remembering this now that such prodigious and arrogant claims are being made on behalf of German efficiency in all fields of human knowledge and enterprise. To read what is being written in the German Press, one would never gather that the be-spectacled professors who are so busily grubbing away in their laboratories in the endeavour to invent something still more diabolical than poison gas wherewith to discomfit the enemies of the Fatherland owed the original stimulus, of which they are making such evil use, not to their own savants but to ours. They are good copiers but bad originators.

And nothing could well be more striking than the contrast between Haeckel and Wallace in regard to their outlook upon life as a whole. A friend of mine, himself one of the most eminent of living scientific men, tells me that on the last occasion when he went to see Wallace, which was not long before the veteran passed away, he found him full of noble enthusiasm concerning the future. It was almost awe-inspiring, said my informant, to gaze upon the lighted face of the aged saint, for such he truly was, and hear him re-affirming with the most earnest conviction his belief in the greatness of human destiny in this world and worlds beyond, his assurance of personal immortality and of all the wonders that had yet to be revealed to the ascending soul on both sides of the tomb. Glory upon glory, he declared, awaits our growing race; life upon life, triumph upon triumph, joy upon joy.

Haeckel's swan song, on the other hand, is of the saddest. He interprets the present and depicts the future in the gloomiest and most sombre terms, and even when he offers comfort and some measure of compensation for the collapse and disappearance of ancient ideals his words are more like a cry of despair. Most of us remember the sensation caused by his *Riddle of the Universe*, published a decade or more ago, and translated into most European languages, including our own. That book exercised a wide and baleful influence upon many who did not know that science as a whole had already passed beyond the point indicated in its pages. Its author avowed himself an uncompromising materialist, and stated that God, Freedom, and Immortality were the three great buttresses of superstition which science must make it her business to destroy. He certainly did his best to destroy them; and now he is at it again, this time provoked thereto by the horrors of the world war. The war, he says, has got rid of religion for ever by reducing to an absurdity its doctrine of divine providence. In view of the deaths of such vast masses of people on the battlefield, in the trenches, by aircraft, warships, submarines, in hospitals and prison camps, all of them the victims of blind chance, others spared by the same blind chance, the foolishness of believing that the fate of individuals as of the whole race is in the hands of an omnipotent Being of benevolent purposes has surely become apparent even to the most ordinary intelligence. As for Christianity in particular, it is put more completely out of court than almost any other form of

faith. The war has made an end of the principle of loving one's neighbour as oneself, and demonstrated the utter futility of pacifism; they are seen to be nothing more than a mockery, and we had best have done with them forthwith. How typically Prussian! Haeckel was born in Potsdam, be it noted, and apparently has never got very far away from it. Shade of Wallace, with your glowing solicitude for the helpless and down-trodden, and your unquenchable faith in the essential goodness of the human heart, what think you of this as the last word of science upon all idealism?

What compensation, then, does the famous German professor hold out for what he thus ruthlessly sweeps away? Here it is: We are to be resigned to our lot, to stop deceiving ourselves as to the beauty and meaningfulness of life. Life has no meaning, he maintains, and is certainly not beautiful; let us cease to expect anything from it beyond what we already only too sadly know. We must have "brave devotion to the Unavoidable," "the knowledge and recognition of the eternity and indestructibility of the Cosmos and of the courses of Nature in which the individual unceasingly appears and disappears in order to make way for new forms and new modes of unending Substance." "What an inexhaustible treasure-house of most noble enjoyment," he continues, "do these countless wonders of an eternal process offer to the thinking man of Kultur!" This, says a reviewer, is the concluding sentence in a book "which will bring but scant consolation to the many who regard Ernst Haeckel as their teacher and prophet."

Scant consolation indeed! I should like to know what the weeping widows and bereaved mothers of Germany get out of it as they think of their husbands and sons sacrificed to their rulers' wicked lust of power. It is all in keeping with the order which we are told is being issued and enforced from Berlin: "No mourning to be worn, and no sad faces to be shown in the streets!" Quite so; how should there be? Will not these fortunate survivors be able to contemplate with joy the fact that their dead have been blotted out "to make way for new forms and modes of unending Substance"?—which, we may assume, will before long have the German eagle universally stamped upon it. What an inspiring prospect for the relatives of those whom Haeckel's callous countrymen have just drowned in the *Lusitania!* And, mark me, the spirit which produces this philosophy governs also this vile deed. It is the ghastliest travesty of a faith that ever was given to the world.

> "Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn."

One of the most puzzling things to me about a certain form of mentality which has its representatives in this country as well as in Germany, is the earnestness with which it preaches despair. I suppose the people who are possessed of it are trying their best to be honest with life and not to allow themselves or others to be cheated with false hopes. But why such proselytising zeal? One would think

they had good news to impart instead of bad, so eager and tireless are they in exhorting us to forgo all brightness of outlook, all faith in ultimate good. It reminds one of the sinister advice of the foul fiend in W. B. Yeats's *Countess Cathleen*, who was trying to persuade his victim to sell her soul to buy bread for the starving in the wretched world where she lived and suffered. As with some among ourselves it was the spectacle of human woe that made Cathleen, noble in purpose but bereft of hope, think of driving a bargain with the powers of hell. Thus spake her tempter—

> "There is a kind of joy
> In casting hope away, in losing joy,
> In ceasing all resistance, in at last
> Opening one's arms to the eternal flames,
> In casting all sails out upon the wind:
> To this—full of the gaiety of the lost—
> Would all folk hurry if your gold were gone."

Strange! This is undoubtedly the mood of not a few people at the present time. There *is* a certain relief sometimes in letting go, as it were, giving up, allowing misfortune to do its worst, refusing to believe any longer in possible alleviations or anodynes for incurable grief. A kind of rest may be attained in the very midst of hopelessness by this method, but it is the rest of death. Neither man nor nation can adopt it without being to all intents and purposes finished with. Wallace or Haeckel, which shall it be? Neither could claim to know much more than the other about the essential facts of existence, but how diametrically opposed are their deductions from

them! Mere cleverness is no passport to eternal truth; the highest discloses itself rather to a certain quality of soul, the teachable, tender and unassuming. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding, and hast revealed them unto babes." None who has ever spoken with mortal tongue could speak with such authority as He whose words these are, and none has cast such a spell over wistful, troubled minds. Our disillusioned, blood-stained age needs to hear them anew. There are two modes of resignation to the ills of life. The one admits the mastery of hell: the other waits the victory of heaven. Therefore I would say to all who care to listen: Do not lightly barter a beautiful hope for a mocking nightmare. They are deceived and deceivers who tell you they have any better reason for declaring that the last word is with evil than the blessed saints have for knowing it to be with good. Live as the saints have lived and you shall know for yourself, for they one and all speak with the same tongue, and none of them have ever been afraid of the worst that earth had to show. It is not true, it is the very opposite of the truth, that the war has done anything whatever to weaken, much less destroy, our confidence in the spiritual background of life. All the baffling problems were here before in their fullness that are here now. Death was just as inevitable, and we have all got to face it just the same as if there had been no war at all. Why in the name of common sense people should think that because the dread activities of death have been

dramatically crowded into a few months, for a few hundred thousand people out of the billions on the earth's surface, instead of being spread over as many years, therefore the consolations of faith have failed, it would be hard to say. What was true before is true still, and as dependable. The pains we endure one by one, and brief at the longest, are no disproof of divine benevolence. On the contrary, if we had but eyes to see and ears to hear, they are the means to blessedness, the discords that imply supernal harmonies. It is not what the world suffers that should lead men to doubt God, but what the world ignores, despises, or betrays of what it dare not deny to be highest and best if it could but attain to it. We are like dreamers tossing in uneasy slumber: and the morning is at hand.

CHAPTER XXV

THE UNCAUSED CAUSE: THE MYSTERY OF GOD AND MAN

OCCASIONALLY a point is raised in a letter which strikes me as of more than merely personal interest, and such is the case with one which lies before me at this moment. It may be summarised briefly thus: A spiritual view of life, such as one tries to advocate from week to week even in the treatment of a secular subject in the press, involves in one form or another belief in God; and the great difficulty which most people feel about belief in God is of imagining a Being of limitless intelligence and power existing right away at the beginning of things without a maker and without having to grow, develop, or attain—in fact, all complete and perfect from the first. This, says one of my correspondents, is absolutely inconceivable; it does violence to all our experience and ways of thinking. We have to struggle up to what we are; so has everything else that lives; but here apparently is a Person, like ourselves but immeasurably greater, who has had no such struggle to go through: He just *is*. Neither in goodness, wisdom, nor any other attribute has He had to acquire anything. It has taken man a million years to learn to do things which God is supposed to

have been able to do without any learning from the foundation of the world. How could such a thing be? There He is; where did He come from? A causeless cause, how can we account for Him?

This, crudely put, appears to be a perplexity to many minds; and in mentioning it here I am far from wishing to enter upon a course of religious apologetic. My only object is to show those who feel it that the problem arises from our own limitations and applies quite as much to our own being as to that of the Deity; that there are plenty of things we have to admit as facts without being able to understand them; and that to those who really want to believe in the innate spirituality of existence there is as thoroughly reliable evidence for what one may call the fact of God as for the fact of man or the fact of the universe itself. I pass over, as not immediately bearing upon the issue, the far more commonly stated difficulty of the silence of God in presence of human woe or the consistency of divine benevolence with such an awful catastrophe as the present world war. Let us stick to the one point before us. If that could be settled, perhaps the others would be by implication. I will only remark in passing that to the highest human perception God is never silent and that His benevolence is never more clearly manifested than in the very midst of pain and death. If there is one special lesson which this Lenten season, with its many reminders of the cross and passion, is meant to teach us, surely it is that.

I admit the mystery of the being of God, a mystery utterly impenetrable by human reason. But what

is there that is not rooted in mystery? Let us recognise that and it will carry us a long way. Life as a whole is mystery—as Charles Dickens would have said, is full of sacred and solemn mysteries—and it is ours to adjust ourselves rightly towards it. You, reader, who read these words, are as much a mystery as your Creator. Have you ever thought of that? Have you ever reflected upon the amazing fact that there is such a being as you in existence at all? Go back in thought to the beginning of time and ask what intrinsic likelihood there ever was that in so many ages you would appear? Beginning of time! Even that is unimaginable. What beginning of time could there be? Try to picture it and you will see the hopelessness of the attempt. Time must be boundless at both ends if there be time at all, and the moment you begin to talk about boundlessness time is clean gone, vanished, swallowed up in eternity. Sir Oliver Lodge once gave a capital illustration designed to show that the very notion of time is part of the limitation at present imposed upon our consciousness. A passenger sitting in a railway carriage, he said, sees the various objects in the landscape through which he is travelling as a succession; trees, fields, ponds, and houses move past his window one after the other. But let him get out and stand on the nearest hill and he will see them all at once; they are no longer a succession, though their relation to each other is exactly the same as before; nothing is changed except his own ability to view them as a whole instead of as parts of a whole. And so, no doubt, it is with all our conceptions of

change, development, and the rest in regard to the entire universe. The limitation is in ourselves. As Tennyson makes the dying Arthur say in the *Idylls of the King*—

> "O me! for why is all around us here
> As if some lesser god had made the world,
> But had not force to shape it as he would,
> Till the High God behold it from beyond,
> And enter it, and make it beautiful?
> Or else, as if the world were wholly fair,
> But that these eyes of mine are dense and dim,
> And have not power to see it as it is."

Here at the beginning of time, let us say, is nothing, nothing at all, no God, no man, no mind, no substance of any sort. And then, a myriad, myriad æons later, we have a being who can write this article and another being who can read it, two self-conscious beings with all sorts of qualities and characteristics of their own. Queer, isn't it? And my affirmation is that it is every whit as inconceivable on *à priori* grounds—from our purely human standpoint—as the being of God. To put the matter whimsically, if we did not know the existence of man to be a fact we should pronounce it impossible, we should not be able to believe it. One might go further and say the same about anything. Why should anything whatever exist? The smallest grain of dust is as great a mystery in itself as that there should be a God to make it. A self-existent clod is as much a mystery as a self-existent God. Nay, a far greater mystery from a higher standpoint is that such a ruffian as Von Tirpitz should be at large in a world

that ought to have learned by this time that nothing is only what it seems, that matter is but the instrument of spirit, and the soul of man the temple of the living God.

Everybody believes in God. There is no difference between us in that respect. There are no atheists except in practice. The only difference between believers and so-called unbelievers consists in what they respectively believe about God. For when we speak about God we all of us mean the power that produced us and keeps us going, the power manifest in the universal order to which we belong. The blankest materialist believes in that power, only he will refuse to call it God or to credit it with knowing or caring anything about us. He will even rhapsodise about it sometimes and expatiate at length on the wonders and glories of the world of worlds—they all do it more or less. I think it was Tyndall who said that the emotions evoked in him by the contemplation of the splendours and sublimities of the natural order were akin to those experienced by the Christian at his prayers. Very likely, seeing they spring from the same root. The real question at issue between the man who believes in God and the man who says he doesn't is how much we are entitled to affirm about the one power in which we all believe and in which, in common with the rest of creation, we live, and move, and have our being. The materialist will declare that it is blind and deaf and dumb; that out there in the trackless void of space is no mind higher than our own, on which our own depends, no guiding intelligence within and behind the flux of things in

general. He will maintain that human self-consciousness is simply a freak of the cosmic process, and a tragic freak at that. Our feeble, glimmering lamp of intelligence is the only ray that lights up the gloom of the universal darkness, a pin-point of timorous awareness amid vast and terrific eternal forces that will presently blot it out again without knowing when it either came or went. And I say that this is all one prodigious assumption. No man is warranted in claiming to say as much. The utmost he can reasonably say is that the whole thing is mystery, mystery from beginning to end, as much mystery in relation to the humblest creature that breathes as to the infinite whence it derives. Religion is steeped in mystery, is a reverent recognition of mystery, but it is also the testimony that the soul can enter into relations with what lies within and behind the mystery. It witnesses that the eternal is not blind, and deaf, and dumb; that it is the source of all feeling, seeing, and knowing; and that it is as possible to enter into communion therewith as for one human heart to hold fellowship with another.

"The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

It always comes back to that, our individual reaction to the stimulus of that mysterious All in One which the universe of universes cannot contain and which the Christian calls God. It is a fact of experience which any man may prove for himself if he has the

inclination. No one will be convinced of it by argument alone any more than he can be convinced of the contrary. All that I am doing now in the way of argument is to demonstrate that the rationality is not all on one side. Reason affirms God in affirming the power behind phenomena, but it needs the spiritual mind to discover and dwell with Him.

What is the matter with the world to-day is not atheism: that is rubbish. It is indifference. Civilisation has got into the way of attributing more and more value to material things as ends in themselves, and that is the mischief. Material things are all right if viewed in their proper perspective as the means whereby spirit finds expression, but to allow ourselves to be absorbed and mastered by them to the exclusion of all question as to the kind of men we are making thereby is fatal to true well-being. That is modern civilisation's great blunder and the main cause of the present war, especially on the part of Germany. Through much tribulation we are being brought back to the simple principle that only in goodness is there any real hope of permanent happiness for mankind. We have largely ignored this and are suffering accordingly. It would, I suppose, be admitted by almost anybody that our astonishing material progress in the last fifty years has not been accompanied by any commensurate moral progress. Labour and Capital were at each other's throats before the war, and will be again after it if we do not watch out. Blatant, selfish, soulless competition in industry has had but one object—that of enriching the individual at the expense of his fellows; it is

going on still in many quarters where the war is being taken advantage of to this end, despite the glorious heroism of the thousands of men who have come right out of it to spill their blood for a spiritual ideal. And we shall never get rid of it till religion becomes central in the national life once more and throughout Christendom, and a purer, simpler faith in God replaces our blind utilitarianism. We cannot serve God and mammon.

CHAPTER XXVI

NOT KNOWING

"THE most terrible thing in life," a friend remarked to me once, "is our ignorance; we really know nothing." One quite understood what he meant, although the phraseology was somewhat ambiguous. For what do we know in the sense of absolute knowledge? Nothing whatever. All our knowledge is relative to something we have to assume but do not actually know. It is commonly taken for granted that the only realities we can be sure about are material ones, the objects cognisable by the five senses. Your plain, practical man, as he regards himself, is convinced that what he can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell is sure and certain, indisputable, and that all beyond is guesswork. Never was a greater mistake. The senses tell us nothing about reality. We see pictures on the retina of the eye, hear sounds, touch surfaces, taste flavours, and smell odours; but as to what produces the pictures, sounds, flavours, and odours we are totally ignorant, as ignorant as men were in the days of Noah. Science deals with phenomena, not with what underlies phenomena. The whole material world around us, for anything we know to the contrary, may have no more substantiality than a dream. All we know is

that there is something which is able to produce certain impressions upon our consciousness, and there we stop; what that something is in itself we have no means of finding out.

As a matter of fact, our assumption of the reality of the external world has nothing to justify it; it is only a habit; we are brought up to think that way, and we just go on doing it in the ungrained conviction that there is no other way of acquiring and interpreting experience. But there is. The Hindu, for instance, instinctively does exactly the opposite. Whereas we start by taking the world for granted and not being sure about the soul, he starts by taking the soul for granted and not being sure about the world. And his postulate is quite as reasonable as ours—more so, in fact, for, when we come to look at it, it does seem rather silly to be so certain of the objective reality of rocks, and hills, and trees, and not at least equally so of the mind that perceives them. For what on earth could we possibly know of these things except for their reaction on the brain of the knower? They may be real or they may not, but for us they only exist as ideas within our own consciousness. As Amiel said in his famous *Journal:* "Heaven, hell, the world are within us; man is the great abyss." And what an abyss! for we know nothing about ourselves either—nothing ultimate, that is. The late Father Tyrrell said in his *Christianity at the Cross-Roads:* "We simply do not know what our own spirits are;" and this is true; he would be a bold man who would say otherwise. Whence came we? whither go we? how stand we to

the eternal? These are the old, old questions which men keep on asking and always will, and to which no positive answer can be given by unaided human faculty. The cynical Persian sage was about right—

> "Myself when young did eagerly frequent
> Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
> About it and about: but evermore
> Came out by the same door wherein I went."

Mark, I do not say there is no answer to these ancient questions; I only say there is none apart from divine revelation; we by ourselves cannot discover it.

But my friend meant more than this when he stated that our ignorance is the most terrible thing in life. He was thinking of the mystery of the world's pain, the sorrow for which there is no earthly cure, the sad farewells without certainty of meeting again, the wondering and longing that find no complete satisfaction even in the best that earth can give. Tennyson felt it when he sang—

> "Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
> Tears from the depth of some divine despair
> Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
> In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more."

Often and often in presence of a scene of wondrous beauty, or listening to some piece of music exquisitely sweet, or when deeply stirred by some great experience or event, I have felt my soul straining at its bonds, as it were, and as if the scales were about to fall from my eyes and I were just going to remember something

long forgotten that would make all things plain, or realise something that would deliver me from the dominion of delusion for evermore. Who has not felt the same, more or less, in moments of deepest feeling and highest vision? Alas, that the shadow should close down again and the world grow dark. And do we not all know the feeling of yearning sadness that comes over one, say, on gazing from a mountain top over some fair valley bathed in summer sunshine or clad in autumn glory? The contemplation of natural beauty can bring tears to the eyes—why? Is it not because it makes us realise our banishment from some higher and more perfect state of being with which our truest affinities are? It is the soul's *heimweh*, our homesickness for a land of purer joys and more blessed loves than here. No one has ever yet managed to explain what beauty is. I think it must be the touch of the supernal, a breaking through into our low estate of that which is above all change, and loss, and death, a sacramental revealing of the ineffable and all-complete. We glimpse it without understanding, but we are conscious of belonging to it somehow, and like exiles we strain our weary gaze towards the distant horizon beyond which is the place of our nativity, the spirit's true abode.

"Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
When the moon is low and thin,
Into our heart high yearnings
Come welling and surging in—
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot hath trod—
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God."

Professor Carruth of Stanford University, California, the author of the well-known poem which contains this verse, has just written to me expressing the sympathy and concern of our cousins across the water at the tribulation through which we are passing in Europe. "What can it all mean?" he says. I wish I could tell him; we don't know. Our best beloved are passing from us through the red mist of war, and our knowledge cannot follow them further, our hands cannot serve them more.

Life's farewells derive most of their poignancy from this fact: we do not actually know what has become of our dead. We do not actually know, when we definitely part from any one, what will have happened before we see him again, if we ever do see him again. A mother once told me that to her dying day she will never forget the clang of the garden gate as her son walked down the path to go and push his fortune in New Zealand. The agony of that moment! The pathos of it! He was almost all she had in the world, and for all she knew that good-bye was permanent so far as this life is concerned. If she had known beyond all doubt, as she knows now, that the boy would come safely home again into her arms, the sound of the closing gate as he went from her would not have rung like a knell upon her heart. He is at the front now, and I warrant she is recalling what she felt the last time he left her side to face the perils of the great unknown. For what if he does not come back this time? She is a devout believer in God and heaven, but perhaps, like thousands more, she finds belief to be one thing and realisation another. If we

could only realise that as surely as the sun is shining somewhere at this moment, so surely are those we call dead living, active, conscious, loving as before, it would pluck the sting out of bereavement; we should not grieve or be desolate any more, much as we should long for a sight of the well-remembered face again and the sound of the voice that once made music in our ears. We should miss our beloved sorely but would not feel them so far away.

Can it be done? I believe it can, and that is why I write. It all depends on how closely we ourselves live to the imperishable and divine—just that and nothing more. We have got to have a soul above sordid values and firmly refuse to submit to the claim that things are only what they seem. Live bravely and consistently for the spiritual, and the material will lose its power to blind your vision. It is not only a question of living nobly; many people are trying to do that who do not get much consolation out of it. It is a question of living by what the saints call faith. And do you know what that is? It is not at all what many people make it out to be, shutting your eyes and jumping, as it were, blindly believing certain things which are from the nature of the case unprovable. I will tell you what it is: it is spiritual instinct. That does not sound much, but wait a moment. That great French thinker, Henri Bergson, has been telling us for a long time that instinct and reason are not, as has been commonly assumed, successive products of the same evolutionary force, reason being the later and higher; they are two

separate branches from the same trunk, and of the two instinct is far more unerring than reason as far as it goes. Reason gropes and fumbles, and is a clumsy instrument at the best for its purpose, which is to enable us to find our way about in this three-dimensional material world of ours; it is not well to rely on it too much when it becomes a question of dealing with the deepest things. Instinct, on the other hand, the instinct of a mother bird to build her nest and rear her young, is of marvellous precision; it always goes straight to the mark. It can and does make mistakes sometimes, as when the mildness of January and February this year misled the birds into thinking spring had come when it had not; but on the whole it is far more to be trusted than intellect in getting at the roots of life, so to speak. I would rather put the case this way: All our reasoning really starts from intuition; and our higher instincts or intuitions, call them which you will, are to be relied upon, especially as we see the beautiful fruits of character they can produce when obeyed to the full. The fact that they transcend reason does not mean that they contradict it. If instinct, or what I thought to be instinct, told me the earth was flat I should pay no heed to it, for reason tells me different. But when reason can neither prove nor disprove those sublime findings of the soul on which all that is good and great in human experience is based, I bid it take its proper place and acquiesce where it cannot deny.

It is good not to know now many things that one day we shall know; and that is where faith comes in.

If you absolutely knew beyond all cavil that it would pay you to tell the truth when you were tempted to lie, or that you would come home safely and be held in high honour for having volunteered for the war, there would be nothing noble either in telling the truth or pretending to risk your life in your country's cause. All that is fine and exalted in human character and conduct is the fruit of this not knowing for certain—that is, it is born of faith. To know for certain what lies beyond death would not necessarily make any one a better man; what does make him a better man is the way in which he rises to the occasion when death has to be faced or sorrow to be borne. I once asked from the pulpit how we should individually behave, the many hundreds of us gathered there, if we knew positively that we had only twenty-four hours to live. The man who drove me home that night is, or was, the proprietor of a large motor-car establishment, but like millions of his countrymen he is now at the front, driving motor wagons for the army. He had evidently been impressed by my question, and as we went along he discussed it. Finally he said, with conviction: "Well, supposing I was as able to attend to business as I am just now, I should go down to the garage as usual." I believe he would, and he was right. For what more do we know about the future than that; and what more do we need to know? If we could see the glory of the invisible world as it is round about us at this moment, there would be no atheists; but perhaps there would be no saints either. For saints are made, as all high worth is made, by spiritual ventures, by battle, effort,

struggle, sacrifice; and the essence of these things is our ignorance of the issue. We have to scale the heights without seeing the summits, believing we shall get there in the end; and it is with heaven to see that we do.

CHAPTER XXVII

OUR MUTUAL IGNORANCE

In the previous chapter I have tried to show that our ignorance of the great issues of life is one condition of the development of the finest fruits of character. It is the mystery that surrounds us and which veils the future that makes great actions great. If we could know with mathematical certainty exactly why we have to suffer this or that, or exactly what will be the outcome of the deeds we do, there could be no such thing as nobleness in conduct. It is just because we don't know, in the sense of complete demonstration, but have to act without knowing—that is, by what alone is worthy to be called faith—that we can rise to sublime heights of moral and spiritual achievement. We are seeing that abundantly in the sacrifices of the present world war. Conversely, one might have added, it is because of our comparative ignorance that we sorrow as we do. We cannot escape it, being limited as we are. But if we knew, absolutely knew without a shadow of doubt, precisely what is going to happen to us all " when this passing world is done "; or, to put it better, if we knew things as a whole precisely as they are at this moment in seen and unseen combined, there would not be much left to

trouble about; weeping eyes would soon be dried, weary hearts would cease to ache.

Another aspect of this theme presents itself to my mind: our ignorance of each other. If we really knew each other, what a difference it would make to life! I am not suggesting it would be altogether good if we did. Here, too, we have to earn our wisdom, and it is well that we should; it is part of our discipline that we should come to fuller knowledge through patience, forbearance, charity, mutual service; we cannot jump into perfect fellowship, perfect all-round understanding; it has to be sought for, gained, and won as part of the world process by which we are being educated for the kingdom of heaven.

But let us try to envisage the situation for a moment, and then consider what we ought to do with reference to it. Here are a couple of instances of what I mean. A father writes to me stating that it is months since he heard from his son at the front, and that he does not know for certain whether the boy is dead or alive except that he has not yet seen his name in the casualty lists, which he scans carefully every day. And he adds this pathetic fact: Every day he goes down to Victoria Station and stands for some hours wistfully watching the trains come in with their freights of wounded and of men home on leave, in the vain hope that his son may be among them, and always he has to go back to his lonely lodging sad and disappointed. For there is something of a tragedy behind this experience. The family is divided. Husband and wife separated years ago, and the children have been brought up

as was inevitable under the circumstances. Perhaps the father is a little trying—who knows? perhaps he is one of those unfortunate people who cannot express themselves well even to their hearts' best beloved; perhaps his children have never suspected the depth and wealth of affection of which he is capable. But my point is that if this soldier son only knew, what very likely he does not even guess, what pain his father suffers on his account, and how he yearns to hear from him, how, in fact, he thinks of little else, the desired letter would soon be forthcoming. What a surprise he would probably get if he knew how his father thinks and feels, if he could only read this outpouring of a long-pent-up experience! And he is not the only one who would get a similar surprise if the secrets of all hearts could be revealed.

The second instance is more personal to myself but is illustrative of the general disability above described. My position at the City Temple brought me into contact with all kinds of people from all over the world. A chance remark in a sermon which found its way into print would sometimes bring me a visit from a person who had to travel hundreds of miles in order to make it. I say a chance remark, but are there any such? God does not always take His human instruments into His confidence when He utters a message by them to other souls. Again and again I have found that an observation to which one attributed no importance has been taken by a hearer or a reader as a direct word for their particular problem. And so, no doubt, it was, but it was not the preacher's word, it proceeded from a higher

source and was intended for that mind in which it found lodgment. One such case was as follows. A young fellow asked for an appointment and came to see me. I did not much care for the look of him when we met. Long experience of the stories of cadgers had made me suspicious of individuals who began by telling one that they had reformed after a downfall and only wanted a little money to make a new start. This chap did not get on with his tale very well, and did not seem to me to have a proper appreciation of his position. He had made free with his employer's money to pay gambling debts and had suffered a term of imprisonment for it—an old story and with no redeeming features about it. He was not a weak-looking man either, and somehow gave one the impression of being callous. So I hardened up, kept silent, withheld sympathy, and listened coldly while the rambling narrative went on. Suddenly, without warning, the lad stopped, his lip quivered, he looked at me helplessly for a moment, and then broke down. He did not try to resume speaking, which was wise as it happened; he simply held out a letter to me, and I took it and read it. It was a wonderful letter, thumbed and dirty from being carried in the ex-convict's pocket, and read and re-read. It was written by the girl who loved him, written before he came out of prison, to tell him that she still believed in him and would share his lot through thick and thin. She had been as good as her word, waiting for him at the prison gate for hours in the darkness and cold of a winter's morning on the day of his discharge, and had been his good angel ever

since, keeping him from utter ruin and despair, and nerving him to fight the almost hopeless fight back into respectability and a footing in life. How wrong I was! How little I knew the man before me! How I had misjudged! What has become of him since I do not know, but I would give a good deal to know. I saw him with different eyes in an instant, and all that in his demeanour previously told against him now told in his favour.

Yes, if we only knew! We are so desperately afraid of being taken in, and not without good reason. But we are far too ready with our contempt; few merit it, and none are entitled to show it. I wonder why it is that harsh judgment is so much more readily indulged in than kind. In almost any society you will hear people's motives canvassed cruelly, often mercilessly, and the worst possible construction placed upon them. And even at the best we are curiously dumb in our relations with each other; we do not positively know what any one else is feeling or thinking. We cannot tell what the inside "feel" of any common experience is to those who share it with us. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy."

"We are spirits clad in veils;
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen.
Heart to heart was never known!
Mind with mind did never meet!
We are columns left alone,
Of a Temple once complete."

We are all more or less lonely; it cannot be helped; it is in the nature of things at our present stage of existence; individually we are islands in a sea of mystery, and as far as I know there is only one boat which can sail that sea, and that is love. Mere propinquity does little or nothing to reveal us to each other. We may be the veriest strangers and yet be in daily association. Often the very last person to whom you can disclose yourself is your nearest relative. It might utterly astonish parents sometimes if they could see their children in other company. And is it not easily possible to go through life without having your real self drawn out by congenial companionship? Millions of people, especially women, live habitually in a state of self-repression; and the average Englishman is far more frightened of letting any one peep inside his soul than he is of facing German guns. It is a rare thing, rare indeed, that some great emotional crisis brings to the surface that elusive something which is oneself, as distinct from every other being that has ever lived. As Lord Houghton says—

> "We live together years and years,
> And leave unsounded still
> Each other's springs of hopes and fears,
> Each other's depths of will:—
> We live together day by day,
> And some chance look or tone
> Lights up with instantaneous ray
> An inner world unknown!"

Unknown even to ourselves probably. Every island in this sea of mystery is but the summit of a mountain

which goes down for miles beneath the waters ere it mingles its being with all the rest. We shall never know ourselves as we are till the day comes when we know as we are known. Faber, the great Roman Catholic hymn writer, said no more than the truth in the striking statement on this subject which he has left on record: "Most frequently men look new in dying. Death discloses whole regions of unexplored character. Life has not by any means drawn us out as it might have done. We all go to our graves unknown, worlds of unsuspected greatness. In truth, life is but a momentary manifestation of us. The longest life is too narrow for our breadth. We are capable of a thousand positions, but life has only placed us in two or three."

It is an old proverb that love is blind; it would be truer to say that it is love only that can see. We find each other with the heart and not otherwise. I wish the word love were not so slippery and capable of so many meanings in the English tongue. I am guilty of no sentimentality in using it now, for I am thinking less of particularistic affection than of the good will which every human being may entertain towards every other, and must, or he will never know himself, let alone anybody else. I listened yesterday to an address by a great churchman, one of the ablest it has ever been my privilege to hear. At the close the speaker said that no man could love to order. I questioned the observation then, and do so still more now. We cannot love to order in the sense of experiencing the same passion of attachment to people indiscriminately that we feel for two or three;

but we can love to order, and ought to do so, in the sense that we can be in charity with all men, can refuse to withhold sympathy even from the erring and the weak, or to be suspicious and censorious in our dealings with mankind at large. In so doing we should only be rendering obedience to the greatest teacher the world has ever had when He said: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." There is a French proverb, "To know all is to forgive all." And I should think there is none truer. If we could only see people as they really are we might often pity but we should never scorn. But as we cannot at present see people as they really are, however hard they may try to make us, the best we can do is to learn to discover with the heart what is hidden from the head. That other French proverb, "I cannot understand, I love," contains a wealth of wisdom, and incidentally the solution of all humanity's problems. Shall we get back to it after the war?

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE AGES OF FAITH AND THE AGES OF REASON: NEW-OLD AND OLD-NEW

An acquaintance asks me to state more clearly what I meant in saying some time ago that the world in which Cicero lived was much more like ours than that of St. Francis, the little poor man of Assisi, twelve hundred years later; and that although the spirit of the twentieth century hitherto had been with Cicero, I earnestly hoped that as a result of the war the rest of it might be with Francis. I willingly comply with the suggestion, for the contrast to which it makes reference is both striking and instructive. What I meant was that the kind of mentality which was dominant in the civilisation of Cicero's age was one with which we should feel at home. The general outlook on life was very similar to ours; we should without much difficulty understand men like Cicero and his contemporaries, their ways were so like our own. On the other hand, people like Francis would puzzle us completely; we should not be able to get near them at all, so to speak; their assumptions, ideals, beliefs, ways of expressing themselves, were all widely different from ours. We should think them mad, or they would think us mad; and the question

is, which of us would be right, if either? I hold and maintain that, with all its drawbacks, it would be better to assimilate ourselves to the mental attitude of men like Francis than that of men like Cicero. We have had too much of the one and not enough of the other. I wish to see our ordinary mentality changed, not in the direction of being either more or less clever than our forbears, but of being simpler, more childlike, more open to influences from the unseen and readier to take them for granted, less governed by purely secular desires and aims. That is all: now to illustrate.

Two thousand years ago southern Europe was the seat of a civilisation which in certain ways has never been surpassed. The world has made no real advance in the cult of the beautiful since then either in art or letters. The Acropolis at Athens was as fine in its way as anything we are building now, finer probably. We have never produced more glorious sculptures than those of Pheidias or Praxiteles; one does not need to be an expert to appreciate that. None of our men of letters in modern times have created a greater literature than that of Homer, Plato, Virgil, Horace, and perhaps Cicero himself. Any reader of this page who cares to get Dr. Samuel Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* out of a library and read it will find that the society of that day was startingly like ours in many ways. It had its millionaires, like Mr. Carnegie, who were expected to make huge public benefactions, endowing institutions and the like; it had its proletariat, trade unions, and strikes. Of course it had its

smart set and week-enders, with their town houses, country houses and seaside villas, pet dogs, yachts and motor cars—the word slipped out, I ought to have said chariots. There were no football matches, but crowds of about the same size, vast assemblages, used to gather to watch men fight in the gladiatorial contests. There were public baths and gentlemen's clubs, and I know not what else. There was even a sort of substitute for a daily paper with all the news and gossip in it. Two years ago this month I was in Italy, and went to look at two interesting spots—Pompeii and Ostia. Both are still in process of excavation, having been buried under débris for ages, the former by a sudden disaster, and the latter by the lapse of time, its inhabitants having deserted it through loss of the trade by which they made their living. Pompeii was a place of retirement for the rich, a centre of luxury; Ostia was a prosperous seaport with a hard-working population. It felt very queer to look at those two cities as their walls and streets had been laid bare by the pickaxe and shovel. They were very different from each other. It struck me as I gazed upon the silent tokens of Pompeii's unblushing sensuality and riotous pleasure-seeking that it pretty well deserved its fate; it was about time it should be blotted out. It shared the lot of Sodom and Gomorrah in more ways than one. And yet, I thought, how like our own palaces, theatres and music-halls are the elaborate buildings of this city of the dead. The very drainage system anticipated our modern sanitation (I don't think they troubled much about drains in the days of St. Francis),

and of all things in the world they actually had central heating!

At Ostia one saw on the quays the offices formerly occupied by the trade union officials, and where they used to meet the employers' representatives when the discussions took place about the standard rate of wages or the expulsion of blacklegs. In no sense can we be said to have invented anything new in the modern organisation of labour as compared with that of these dockers and merchants' clerks of old. They had a very vigorous municipal life, too, and statues and inscriptions setting forth the virtues of deceased mayors and aldermen (of course they did did not call them that, but it came to the same thing), and there were hints that the woman question was a sore point then as now; suffragettes of sorts had been at work. And then the elections, the parties, the quarrels between public men, the caucuses, the candidatures! Gentlemen who thought they would do well on the Town Council issued their election addresses and asked for the support of the ratepayers in our good, enlightened British style. There they all were, just as if it were yesterday. One felt that if Cicero had come up the street one might have asked him the nearest way to the Underground. But then one remembered that Cicero would probably not have been walking up a street in Ostia; it would be like looking for the editor of the *Spectator* amongst the costers' barrows in Whitechapel. Cicero belonged to the intellectuals and took his exercise in the Forum in a thoroughly decorous manner, no doubt. Did he not once say that no shopkeeper

could be a gentleman? And how eloquently he wrote about the dignified joys of old age and about death as "coming into harbour," and what a poor show he made when death actually overtook him in his own garden in the person of the imperial executioner! For all his polite moralising, Cicero's interests were wholly of this world, and he had the vaguest ideas of the beyond. But one would not have been surprised to meet the Right Hon. Will Crooks in Ostia at the beginning of the Christian era; it would just be his setting—the working man part of it, anyhow, the plutocratic part would be the haunt of the makers of huge war profits.

Now let us jump a thousand years or more nearer to our own time. What a change! Here is a world of unfamiliar features indeed, though it is that of our own ancestors and partly occupies our own soil. Look at the Gothic cathedrals newly reared with their pinnacles soaring to heaven, then as now the greatest triumph of the builder's art, the last word in architecture, sacred poems frozen into stone, as they have been fitly called. We see them now after the wear of ages, but what must they have been originally? Surely the people who could plan and erect such structures as these to the glory of God must have possessed something worth our while to recover. The life of the community centred around the altar. The nave of the parish church was the place where the affairs of the parish were transacted, the social meeting-place—hence, perhaps, the reason for the rood screen to shut off the inner sanctuary from the place of conversation and discussion. Canon

more efficient in our butcheries, more expert in the invention of infernal machines for destroying human life, and less scrupulous in employing them. There was such a thing as the Truce of God in the Middle Ages; where is it now?

How should we ever understand a man like St. Louis (King Louis IX of France), who went to war over the very same ground as our troops are now occupying in the near East, but with a different motive? He went to wrest the tomb of Christ from the followers of Mahomet; Germany makes common cause with them against the rest of Christendom. Joinville tells an amusing story (amusing from our point of view, not his) about the voyage of the king and his crusading army through the Mediterranean to Egypt, and how they were caught in storm after storm and could make no headway. The sailors saw that a mountain on the north coast of Africa kept pace with them hour after hour, and at last they cried out in terror that the phenomenon was due to enchantment by evil spirits. The only thing to be done was to carry the Blessed Sacrament in solemn procession round the deck with the priest chanting a Litany the while; so poor Joinville, who was terribly seasick, was routed out of his hard bed, and half led, half carried in that procession behind his king with the object of getting rid of the invisible makers of storms who were hindering their progress so grievously. We can picture the comic spectacle—the cockleshell of a ship pitching and rolling, the priests in their vestments staggering along with their sacred burden,

Jessopp tells us that probably the villagers themselves helped to build the church with their own hands; fancy them doing it now! Mr. Chesterton has said somewhere that a cathedral is of more importance to national well-being than a factory. Our forefathers certainly thought so, but do we? Nothing could better typify the change that has passed over the world since the days when the Gothic cathedral was new than the fact that the factory has come to usurp its place. It speaks of utilitarianism in every line, the general uglification and sordidification of life, if I may be permitted to coin a word—slums, sweated industries, overcrowding, and all the rest with which we are only too familiar. I do not want to idealise the past; I think I know too much of history for that. The age of St. Francis was a rude, violent, ignorant age in many ways, but it had the *sense of the eternal*, that is what I am driving at. If a people's buildings are the expression of its soul, then the soul of the thirteenth century was nearer God than ours. The unseen world was every whit as real to the men and women of that period as the seen is to us, and occupied the foreground of their thoughts; we have turned matters just the other way round. What we need to get back is not their superstitions but their childlike faith. Until the war broke out I should have said that we were more humane than they, had outgrown their cruelties and brutalities, but Zeppelin raids, Belgian and Serbian atrocities, Armenian massacres and the like have taught us better. We cannot boast of any superiority now over the ancients in these respects except to say that we are

feebly twittering their lay, the pious king following, and behind him a stumbling, jumbling company of mail-clad knights and their retainers, green and white with *mal de mer* but having to keep their place in the ranks somehow. There would be terrible catastrophes at intervals, we may be very sure! And no one could be surprised to learn that at the third time round the menacing mountain had disappeared! Of course it would; anything would that was assailed by such intrepid devotion as that. But before we laugh let us be quite sure that we really know more of the spiritual universe than those simple-minded adventurers did.

Read the *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, and then ask if picture theatres and Council schools—or the most up-to-date German scientific education, with its utter destruction of the spirit of reverence in presence of the holy mysteries everywhere surrounding us—have done so very much for our betterment, after all. Take the quaint account of the little boy "very pure and innocent" who slept near St. Francis and tied the cord round his waist to that of the saint so as to know when the latter got up to pray in the night. "And coming close up to the place where Saint Francis was praying, he began to hear much discourse; and drawing nigher for to see and learn what it was he heard, he beheld a marvellous light that shone round about Saint Francis, and therein he saw Christ and the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist and the Evangelist, and a great multitude of angels, speaking with Saint Francis." We are so

clever nowadays that we know that boy was a liar and never saw anything of the sort, and that all the other wonderful tales about St. Francis and his doings are false likewise; that Brother John's ecstasy at Communion, when "straightway the form of the bread vanished, and in the Host appeared Jesu Christ the Blessed One, incarnate and glorified" was pure delusion; that the fierce wolf of Agobio was never converted, and that the fishes and the birds never listened to sermons, however eloquent. But at the risk of offending all my readers, and losing any respect they ever had for me, I confess that I am sceptical of the scepticism, and that in any event I wish we had the state of mind back again that could so believe, seeing God in everything, and with their belief living lives of simple, humble, self-crucifying goodness and love.

Lucretius was a contemporary of Cicero, and an equally clever man, an uncompromising atheist and materialist, like nearly all the intellectuals of his day. There was plenty of churchgoing, by the way—if that be the right name for it—and the clever people were greatly amused thereby. Fashionable ladies thronged the temple of Isis, for instance, and made valuable offerings at the shrine to obtain the favour of the goddess for their lovers. Spiritualism and fortune-telling had their votaries, and I daresay Cicero himself had his palm read at a drawing-room meeting now and then. I am quite sure Lucretius would not. He hated supernaturalism in all its forms. The following is from Mr. Mallock's translation of his great poem *On the Nature of Things*—

"O peoples miserable! O fools and blind!
What night you cast o'er all the days of man,
And in that night before you and behind
What perils prowl! But you nor will nor can
See that the treasure of a tranquil mind
Is all that nature pleads for, for this span,
So that between our birth and grave we gain
Some quiet pleasures, and a pause from pain."[11]

Really, it is very like what Haeckel is saying to-day, only that one has never known the great German savant to break into poetry. Poor Lucretius! He committed suicide fifty years before Christ was born. Is it clear now why I earnestly wish that in the years following the war we might shake off the spell of this soul-killing secularity of temper and get back to the simplicity and trustfulness of the wonder-working child-man, who always described himself as "Christ's poor little one, Francis"?

THE END

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